[illegible]

OR, THE

SINNER

Condemned of Himself:

BEING

A Plea for God, against all the Ungodly, proving them alone guilty of their own Destruction; and that they shall be Condemned in the great Day of Account, not for that they lacked, but only because they neglected the means of their Salvation.

And also,

Shewing, how fallacious and frivolous a Pretence [illegible] any, to say, They would do better, if they [illegible], when indeed all men could, and might do better, if they would.

By One, that wisheth better to All, [illegible] do to themselves.

Hos. 13. 9. *O* Israel, *thou hast destroyed thy self, [illegible] in me is thy help.*

Ezech. 33. 20. *O ye House of* Israel, *I will judge [illegible] every one after his wayes.*

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς εἰς ψυχὴν ἀδικούμενος, ἐὰν [illegible] ἑαυτὸς εἰς ψυχὴν ἀδικοῦσαμεν. Chrys[illegible] [illegible] κα'.

LONDON,

[illegible]inted for *Edward Brewster*, [illegible]

The PREFACE.

WE are all by nature, as much inclin'd to hide and excuse Sin, as we are to commit it. Sin and Shifting (as one saith well and truly) came into the World together: And we have drawn both alike, from the loynes of our first Parents. No sooner had they sinn'd, but they hid themselves: And no sooner had God found them out, but they fell to excuse themselves. The Man puts the fault upon the Woman: And she again turns it over to the Serpent. Yea; (as *Calvin* and others observe upon *Gen.* 3.) *Adam* spared not to charge

Gen. 3.

Neq; hoc continuus Deum simul accipit in crimen, &c.

God himself, by saying, *The Woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* As much as if he should have said, *If thou hadst left me alone, as I was, I had never done as I did.*

Now among all those many inventions, which men have sought out, to excuse themselves in their sins, this is one, and a chief one, *viz.* That they never had Light enough to convince them, that their way was not good before God. They confess, their Ministers have cryed out against them, and often passed sentence upon them, as men running headlong to their own destruction: But they never met with such Ministers, as had Arguments strong enough to perswade them to alter and change their way. Had this

been

been once done to the purpose, there had been no more adoe; They ſhould ſoon have amended all, that others knew to be amiſs. But in this the Miniſters are ſtill wanting, and ſo long as they are ſo, they have reaſon (as they think) for what they do. For themſelves, they are good natur'd, and well diſpos'd, and their endeavour hath been, and ſtill is, to do their utmoſt, ſo as if there be a fault, they know not how to help it, the blame muſt lye ſomewhere elſe. They love God with all their hearts, and labour (what in them lieth) to keep his Commandments, repenting every day with hearty ſorrow, for all they have done amiſs. Indeed, they meet with many hindrances, ſo as they cannot do as they would. But ſo long as they are willing,

and well minded, they are confident God will bear with them, though they cannot make so fair a shew, nor flourish it, as some Professors, who (as they think) in their doings and dealings are none of the best. Having these, or the like perswasions, they keep up an inveterate prejudice against all pretences to more circumspect and precise walking, such as the Apostle adviseth, *Eph.* 5. 15, 16. and bless themselves in their own hearts, promising rest and peace to their Souls, even when they walk after their own devices, because they do (as they perswade themselves) the best they can, and would with all their hearts do better, if they could.

Now, that which is intended in this ensuing Discourse, is to de-

demonstrate, That all these are fallacious pretences, and that there is no want of means and helps to their Conviction and Conversion, but they have Light enough, which they suppress, and keep under, as the *Gentiles* did, *Ro.* 1. 18. and out of a desire to satisfie their fleshly lusts, refuse to follow whither Scripture and Reason lead them.

For their Quarrels and Exceptions, they are like those of the *Jews*, in our Saviours time. *Why dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* Joan. 10. 24. *What Sign shewest thou, that we may see, and believe?* Joan 6. 30. As if they wanted nothing but Light, to see, whether he was the *Messias* indeed. If they could once be assured of that, they needed not to be perswaded

ſwaded any further, he ſhould have Diſciples and Followers enough. Yet none of us (I hope) will ſay of thoſe *Jews*, They had not Light enough, when the Sun of Righteouſneſs aroſe to ſhine upon them. Nor dare we (I ſuppoſe) excuſe them, notwithſtanding all their exceptions from the guilt of crucifying the Lord of Glory. And then, how can any of us look on our ſelves, as more excuſable than they?

Hereupon all they, who retain ſo good an opinion of themſelves, and are alwayes queſtioning and quarrelling others, that are dealing with them, for the good of their Souls, (juſt as the *Jews* did our Saviour) might do well to enquire, Whether the ſame Spirit of contradiction be not in them, that

that was in those *Jews*. To pick Quarrels, and make Objections, and put others to answer them, is no hard work for any to do, that have a mind to it. But to do the Will of God, as he requires it to be done, is hard work to flesh and blood, and calls for Self-denial, and renouncing our own Wills. And what if this be it, and nothing else, that lieth at the bottom of all those fair pretences, which are made by many, of their being not convinced and satisfied in their Judgements and Consciences, about the matters of Gods Kingdom, and their own Salvation. Wherefore they should consider more seriously, Whether he that searcheth the hearts, and will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, do not see, they pretend one thing, and mean another;

ther; and whiles they like not the Light that ſhines to them, they would fain excuſe it, by ſaying, They have not Light enough.

Wherefore I would fain perſwade all, to have no ſuch good opinion of themſelves, but rather to ſearch and try their hearts and wayes, till they diſcern and diſcover that enmity which is in them againſt the righteous & holy Wills of God. For the Apoſtle reſolves, *Ro.* 8. 7. That ſuch a root of bitterneſs there is in all men by nature, and he that knows any thing of himſelf, cannot be ignorant of it. I ſay again therefore, Let no man bleſs himſelf in a fond conceit (no better than a ſick mans dream) of the goodneſs of his own heart. For ſo long as men do this, they do but lock and bolt

up

up all the passages of their Souls, that nothing God doth or saith, can have entrance into them, or make any impression upon them. These are farr from judging themselves, or justifying God; But say in effect, as *Israel* of old, *Ezech.* 18. 25. *The way of the Lord is not equall.* These men are indeed far from righteousness, and wholly indispos'd to learn it. Their Souls are as some old Sores, so nasty and filthy, as they must be wash'd and wip'd, before any healing Plaisters can be laid on them. Or as some mens Bodies, so foul, and full of bad humours, as they must have Preparatives, to make way for the intended Medicines, which otherwise will have no efficacy or operation. Now this Discourse is intended only as a Preparative, to make way for other Physick,

by

by rowſing men up to conſider, in what a condition they are, and that there is an enmity in them againſt God, and his Laws; and that this enmity is it, which cauſes ſo many diſputes and exceptions about Gods Diſpenſations of Grace and Providence; and that they do but flatter and deceive their own Souls, in thinking themſelves ſo well inclin'd to God and goodneſs, and ſhould do well enough, if they had ſome-what, which they want (as they think) without any fault of their own. For what hope is there, to perſwade men out of their ungodly wayes, ſo long as they conceit themſelves to lye under a fatal neceſſity of being as they are, and ſo it is no fault of theirs, that they are no better? Or how ſhall men be prevail'd

with, to change their course, so long as they lye under such gross mistakes of God, and his wayes, as to think, he is wanting to them, and they are not wanting to themselves? Such mistakes do a great deal of mischief in the World, and keep up cursed prejudices in the hearts of men, against the wayes of Gods Commandments, and make them to cry Peace to their Souls, even whiles they are walking after their own imaginations, and running head-long to the pit of destruction.

Now this Discourse be-speaks men, to consider, Whether Gods wayes, or their own, are unequal; and whether God or they shall be justified in the last and great day of account.

There

There needs no more to be said in way of Preface, but That the God of all Grace, will vouchsafe to give his Spirit, for convincing men of all their Mistakes and Prejudices, so as they may learn to judge themselves, and justifie him, (which is the work they have to do, in order to their Salvation) is the hearty Desire and Prayer of him that penn'd, and them that publish'd this ensuing Treatise.

Thomas Ford.

AYTOKATAKPITOΣ,
OR
The Sinner Condemned of Himself.

WHat the Apostle saith of an Heretick, after the first and second Admoniti-on, may truly be said of every one that goeth on in his wickedness; *He Sinneth being condemned of himself*: He sinneth wilfully, and without excuse, he hath no cloak for his sin; for he condemns himself in what he doth, in that his practise is contrary to his principle. Tit. 3. 10, 11.

That this is the case of all, or most ungodly Sinners, I shall endeavour to make good in the ensuing Treatise. And in order thereunto, I shall lay down the summe and substance of all, in one general Proposition, which I offer, as the conclusion to be proved, *viz.*

That, whatever excuses or pretences, are or may be made by any, all the mistakes, and miscarriages of men, about the matters of Gods Kingdome, and their own Salvation, are only, and altogether from their not improving the means, and helps, which are allowed them; and that this also is only from the sinful corruption, and cursed inbred enmity of their own hearts and nature. The general proposition to be proved.

1 Argument. To prove this, I argue, first from somewhat implyed in the Proposition it self, *viz.* The sufficiency of helps and means on Gods part allow'd to men. And

The Argument may be formed thus:

If God have sufficiently provided for mens Salvation, so as he is not wanting in what lay on him to do, then mens neglect is the only cause of their destruction, But God hath sufficiently provided, *&c. Ergo*, &c.

Here I shall not stand to prove the consequence of the first Proposition, because if God be not, of necessity man only must be wanting to himself. If any shall alledge, that the world, the flesh, and the Devil are great enemies, and hinderances to mens Salvation, I grant it, but deny withall, that therefore God is to be charg'd with mens destruction, or that any man who dieth in his sins, is the more excusable. For the fault is in men only, that they willingly give themselves up to be led aside by those enemies of their Souls, and so neglect their own Salvation. Sure I am, nor one, nor all of those enemies, could prejudice our everlasting estate, if we did not freely and willingly give our selves over to their power.

And this will appear in my proving the second Proposition, *viz.* That God hath sufficiently provided for mens Salvation, *&c.*

Here I shall first instance in particulars, and therein shew, what provision God hath made.

1. To rise no higher than *Adams* fall; when man

man ſtood in moſt need of Gods help, was there not a ſpeedy proviſion made of an allſufficient Saviour, and help laid upon one that was mighty, *and able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come unto God by him?* Heb. 7.25. No ſooner had God convinced our firſt Parents of their ſin and miſery, but he preſently revealed his Son, to be made the ſeed of the woman, and Gen.3.15. in mans nature to fulfill whatever was needfull to the reconciling of the world. In this Salvation ſo prepar'd, and promis'd, there was no defect, as appears by the Apoſtles teſtimony, *Heb.* 7.25. The only defect is on mans part, in not coming to God through Chriſt, that he may be ſaved. Who dare ſay, that God hath made but a ſcanty proviſion for our ſalvation? Surely it cannot ſtand with his faithfulneſs and goodneſs, *who commands all men every where to repent.* Would he (think you) invite ſo many gueſts, if he knew not before hand, that there is entertainment enough for them all? No man (for ought I have heard) ever made queſtion of this, That if all would come to Chriſt, all ſhould be ſaved by him. And this is the tenour of the Goſpel-Covenant, (which alone reveals the way of Salvation) *He that beleiveth ſhall be ſaved*, &c. *Mar.* 16. 16. For any Objection that may be made, I ſhall anſwer it in its due place. Act. 7.30.

2. As God hath provided an allſufficient ſalvation, ſo hath he alſo allowed ſufficient means for the applying of it, ſo as it may be effectual.

1. There is the word of Grace, or the Goſ-

pel full and clear in all particulars, so as there is nothing necessary to be known concerning this salvation, but a man may run and read it. What was sufficiently discovered in the Old Testament, according to the dispensation of God for those times, is more clearly revealed in the New; so as we may well say with the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 3.25. *The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto Salvation.*

2. There is the Spirit to teach us inwardly and in the heart, what is laid before our eyes in the word. And both these are promised, *Isa.* 59.21. If any object, That that promise is made only to the Church, I may grant it, and yet answer well enough thus; That the Word and Spirit promised to the Church, proclaim and offer Christ to the world; and they that are without, are bound to receive what is offer'd, and to joyn themselves to the Church. For what is it that makes and constitutes the Church? Is it not hearkning to, and obeying the voice of God in his Word? There is the sound of the Gospels voice, which the world is bound to hearken to, as I hope to shew hereafter. And if the wicked world refuse, and will not enquire after it, that is their own fault, and God is not wanting, as shall be more fully clear'd in its due place.

For present it may suffice, that there is an abundance of the Spirit, and of the Word, enough to enlighten and enliven all the world, if they would heed and attend them. Who dare say, that Gods Word and Spirit are not sufficient to instruct us in all things necessary,

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and to lead us into all truth? For Papists quarrelling the sufficiency of Scripture-revelation, I have nothing to do with it now; it serves my turn, if it be acknowledged, that God hath made a sufficient revelation of his will, and the way of our Salvation.

3. That God might not leave himself without many witnesses, we have also the work of Creation, that shews us the way of glorifying him; else how could the Apostle upon this one ground, prove the Gentiles to be inexcusable in their Idolatries? *Rom.*1.19,20. And is there not also a goodness of God in his providential dispensations, that leads men to repentance? *Rom.*2.4. Yes, the Psalmist shews it at large, *Psal.*107. And this amongst others seems to be one thing, that's very observable in that Psalm, *viz.* That men otherwise void of all piety, and such as care little for Gods company at other times, when distresses, and dangers assault them, even by nature, and natural conscience, are led to call upon God. This shews sufficiently, that their neglect of God in times of prosperity, is a stifling the natural principles of Religion, implanted in all men, for the improvement of divine providences. Psal. 19. 1, 2, 3.

4. To say no more. God hath made us reasonable creatures, and given us a minde to understand, so as to chuse the good, and refuse the evil. And have we not all of us a conscience to accuse and excuse, to encourage us in that which is good, and affright us from all that is evil? In one word; The way of Life is laid before us, and we have eyes to see it, if we had

a minde to walk in it. Men do not go to Hell as a beaſt goeth to the ſlaughter-houſe, or as one led blindfolded, not knowing whither he goeth, but they refuſe the way of Life, and chuſe the ways of Death; as I hope to ſhew hereafter more at large.

Now let me ſumme up all that hath been ſaid, and thus argue; If God hath prepared an all-ſufficient ſalvation; and provided all means neceſſary for the applying of it, what have we to complain of more, than what we finde in our ſelves? May not the Lord ſay as he did, *Iſa.* 5.4. *What could have been done more, that I have not done?* or as *Jer.* 2 5. *What iniquity have you found in me?* Have I been wanting to you? Rather, have not you wronged your ſelves, and been ſinners againſt your own Souls? And will not the Lord ſay thus one day? Queſtionleſs he will; elſe how ſhall he clear himſelf in condemning the wicked world? For ſuppoſe God to be wanting in any thing neceſſary on his part for our ſalvation; may not a condemned ſinner juſtly reply thus? Lord thou haſt now paſs'd the ſentence of death upon me, and thou art now ſending me to dwell with everlaſting burnings, which I ſhould never have run my ſelf into, if thou hadſt done that which lay upon thee to do. May not ſuch a ſoul ſay, alas! I knew nothing of what I ſhould have known in order to my ſalvation, but was left in the dark without any light to ſhew me the way of Life. Had God done his part, I might have done mine, and ſo it had never been with me, as now it is. Shall any of the damned (think you)

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ever have cauſe, or juſt occaſion to quarrel God in this manner? Or if any ſhould, I muſt confeſs, I know not how to clear God in his condemning the world of the ungodly.

But God will certainly clear himſelf one day, *and convince all the ungodly*, that their damnation is juſt: Elſe why is God ſo often clearing himſelf upon all occaſions, from having any hand in the deſtruction of thoſe that periſh? For certain God would never clear himſelf (as often he doth) if he knew not himſelf to be clear; and he muſt have moſt unworthy thoughts of God that thinks otherwiſe. God is not as man, to juſtifie himſelf in any thing, but what is right and true. Jude 15.

Now, how often doth God clear himſelf, and caſt all the blame of mens deſtruction upon themſelves? Ezech. 18. 31, 32. *Caſt away all your tranſgreſſions*, &c. *for why will you die? I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth.* Hoſ. 13. 8. *O Iſrael thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf.* To this purpoſe alſo read *Eſay* 5. *v.* 1, 4.

Obj. But ſome will reply and ſay, Who denies or queſtions this? you labour to little purpoſe, and might well have ſpared this pains.

Sol. To clear my ſelf, give me leave to ſay; 1. That many are charg'd with making God the author of ſin, and the contriver (in a ſort) of mans damnation. I do not ſay they are juſtly charg'd, but that ſome are ſo charg'd by others, is moſt true.

2. There are but too many in the world, who charge God fooliſhly as faulty and guilty of mens deſtruction. I ſay not, they do it ex-

expreſly, and *in terminis*, but interpretatively, and by conſequence they ſay, that the fault is on Gods part, and not on theirs, if they die and are damn'd. What elſe is their meaning, when they pretend, as they do, ſo much love and good liking to God, and the wayes of his Commandments? Are there not many that ſay in their hearts, and ſome upon occaſion with their mouths alſo, Far be it from us to hate God, or any of his wayes? God forbid that we ſhould procure to our ſelves the damnation of our own ſouls? Nay, they will not be well pleas'd with any other, that ſhall charge them for ſo doing. If others will believe them, they are as willing to be ſav'd, and as willing to walk in the way of Life and Salvation, as any man can wiſh them to be. But alas! what would you have of them? If they knew better, they ſhould do better; and for their part, they do the beſt they can, and as far as God gives them grace. Now, is not this in effect all one as to ſay, if we are caſt away, and die in our ſins, it is no fault of ours? How could we help it? We have done all that we were able to do, and ſhould with all our hearts have done more, if God had given us wherewithall. Is not this to quit our ſelves, and caſt all the blame upon God only? Yes; it is to charge it upon God alone, that we die and periſh in our ſins.

Now for the ſake of theſe, and ſuch as theſe I have undertaken to plead for God, as well as I can. For (to ſpeak as it is indeed) God is much ſpoken againſt in the world; and as there are too many of whom it may be ſaid, *God is not*

in all their thoughts; or, *there is no God, is all their thought*, Pſal. 10. 4. ſo there are many mouths open'd againſt him, to charge him with all the fault of mens deſtruction. And I know not in my capacity, how to do him better ſervice, than to ſpeak a good word for him in this caſe, and let the world know it.

To return where we left before; I ſhall a little further, and more fully ſhew, that God is (if I may ſo ſay) exceeding carefull to clear himſelf of having any hand in the death of him that dieth: He thinks he hath done what was to be done on his part; *What could have been done more, that I have not done?* Eſay 5. 3, 4. As if he ſhould ſay, there wanted nothing to their being a fruitfull people, if they would themſelves. Conſider alſo what our Saviour ſaith, John 5. 40. *And* (or rather, *But*) *you will not come unto me, that you might have life.* Verſ. 39. he had told them, that the Scriptures teſtified of him, that he was the light and the life of men; *But* (ſaith he) *you will not come unto me that you may have life.* Is not that as much as to ſay, Here is life laid up in me all-ſufficient to all intents and uſes, and ſafe enough, but you will not come and take it, though you may have it only for the asking? If this be not the full purport and meaning of thoſe words, I cannot imagine what it ſhould be. For our Saviour ſpeaks plainly to them, that if they die in their ſins, 'tis not becauſe eternal life is not to be had, but becauſe they will not have it. And is not this enough to clear God, and condemn the unbelieving world? Adde to this that

affectio-

affectionate paſſage of our Saviour, Mat. 23. 37. *I would have gathered them as an hen gathereth her chickens, but they would not.* This clears him; and dare any man ſay or think, that our Saviour meant otherwiſe than he ſpake? O! how happy had that people been, if they had taken him at his word! Take one place more, *Luc.* 19. 41, 42. how pathetically he wiſhes, *If thou hadſt known in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!* Was it not in his heart (think you) that *Jeruſalem* was the only cauſe of her deſtruction? And by all you may ſee, the Lord is willing to clear himſelf, and we may aſſure our ſelves he is as able to do it. He well knows, that all his diſpenſations of grace and providence are ſuch, as will clear him againſt all the world. Our Saviour knew well (and hath not forgotten it to this day) that when he was on earth, he was no way wanting to the work which his Father had put into his hands. And this appears *Eſay* 49. 4. that God will juſtifie him, that it was not by any default of his, that his labours had no better ſucceſſe; *His judgement is with the Lord, and his reward with his God.* He knew (and knows ſtill) that he had done all that he had to do, for the reclaiming of his Countrymen, and for the reconciling of the world. Did the *Jews* want any means, whereby they might know him to be, as he was indeed, the promiſed *Meſſiah?* True, they thought ſo then, and were ever calling upon him for farther and fuller evidences; but they were but vain, and falſe pretences, ſomewhat the ſame, or very

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like to what others ſtill have, as I ſhall hereafter prove. But whatever they pretended then, I am confident they are now of another minde. Whiles men are on earth they have too good thoughts of themſelves, and are too apt to entertain hard thoughts of God, and his dealings with them. But I am apt to think, that the damned in Hell complain moſt of themſelves. Sure the Parable (ſome will have it a ſtory) *Luc.* 16. ſeems at leaſt to ſound this way: For though it ſore troubled the Rich-man to be in that place of torment, and fain would he have had ſome relief, though never ſo little, yet he complains of none beſide himſelf for his coming thither. One ſaith indeed, *That no man goes to Hell, but he hath ſome excuſe or pretence for it*: And I am of his minde in this, if he mean it of men, whiles they are upon earth. But I much queſtion, whether the damned, when once they arrive at their long home, be not forſaken of all thoſe pretences, and begin to change their minds: However it be (for I reſolve nothing in the caſe) the Rich-mans deſires for his brethren that ſurviv'd him, ſhew he thought, that while men are upon earth they may prevent their own damnation. And though he would have had ſome extraordinary way taken for the Salvation of his brethren, yet *Abrahams* anſwer clears it beyond all queſtion, that they and others like them, have means enough if they will but uſe them; *They have Moſes and the Prophets*: And have not we moreover the Evangeliſts and the Apoſtles? Read *Luc.* 16. 31. and reſolve, if men

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will not hear theſe, no extraordinary appearances will work upon them. Queſtionleſs *Abraham* in Heaven knew the truth, as well as the Rich-man in Hell. But for what may be ſaid of ſtrange providences, and the good effects of them in ſome, I ſhall have occaſion to diſcourſe hereafter.

Though what I have ſaid might ſerve to clear God, as to his making ſufficient proviſion of means, in order to mans Salvation, yet I may not yet lay aſide this part of my task. For there lies a great Objection that is very obvious, and muſt be anſwer'd: The Objection ariſes from the forlorn condition of the *Gentiles*, whiles the partition-wall between them and the *Jews* ſtood firm; and the ſame Objection lies now as to *Pagans*, who are without God in the world. *Obj.* For it may be ſaid, Since the *Gentiles* of old, and many now are denyed the ordinary means of grace, and ſaving knowledge; How can it be maintain'd, that there is a ſufficient allowance of means on Gods part, and that no man hath cauſe to complain of any but himſelf.

Sol. In anſwering this Argument I have (I hope) the Apoſtle to help me, and he helps me to anſwer thus; That even thoſe *Gentiles* who had not the written Law, (which the *Jews* had) *were without excuſe*, Rom. 1. 20. Now if they be without excuſe, there needs no more to clear Gods juſtice in their condemnation. But the Apoſtle proves what he ſaith, and ſhews why, and how they are without excuſe, verſ. 19. *Becauſe that which may be known of God is manifeſt*

ifeſt in them; *For God hath ſhewed it unto them, therefore they are without excuſe.* Whatever ſerv'd to ſet forth the glory of God, or whatever might excite and move them to glorifie God, all this is manifeſt in them. And the ſame Interpreter thinks there is a ſpecial emphaſis in the Prepoſition [*In.*] It notes (ſaith *Calvin*) ſuch a manifeſtation, as would admit of no evaſion, they could not put it off. Whatever be the emphaſis of that Prepoſition, or whether any at all, it is enough for our purpoſe, *that they withheld the truth in unrighteouſneſs*, verſ. 18. They ſuppreſſed the inbred true notions, which they had of God. Theſe they kept (as we uſe to ſay) under-hatches, they obſcur'd and clouded them, and would not ſuffer them to ſhine out, and ſhew themſelves. And this they did in unrighteouſneſs, *i. e.* by force and violence, ſaith *Piſcator*, and *Calvin* too. Some count of an Hebraiſm in the expreſſion; but if it be otherwiſe, it ſerves our turn well enough. It was the baſe corruption of their hearts that made them oppreſſe, and keep under the natural light that was in them. The eternal power and Godhead were manifeſted in them, ſo as they were not, could not be ignorant of them. Hence I argue, that they wanted not light, or means to ſhew them a better way of worſhipping God, than the way they took, which was indeed againſt all reaſon, as the Apoſtle there proves. Conſider farther, that *they liked not to retain God in their knowledge*, verſ. 28. *i. e.* They hated, and were willing to be rid of that know-

τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, Quod de Deo cognoſcere fas eſt, vel expedit. Calvin.

Indicat manifeſtationem quâ propius urgeantur, quam ut refugere queant.

knowledge of God, which they had, and *v.* 25. *They changed the truth of God into a lye.* They heeded not the true, implanted notions of God, but followed their own devices, which carried them to falſe wayes of worſhipping God, under the ſimilitudes of his creatures. Now this was an act of their perverſe Wills, in oppoſition to, and in diſpight, as it were, of their natural principles. Nay further, ſaith the Apoſtle, *verſ.* 21. *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankfull,* &c. They glorified him not as became his moſt excellent Divine Majeſty, which they knew, or might have known ſo well, as to have ſerved him in a better manner, if they would. *They were not thankfull:* They had a talent, and would not improve it as they might and ſhould have done: Their returns were no way ſuitable to their receipts. Now conſider the Apoſtles arguing in this caſe, and it appears plainly, that he clears God, in condemning the Gentiles, upon this account, that they had means and helps to know, and do better, but they rejected them to follow their own inventions. And the ſame may be ſaid now of any of the Heathens alive, to ſhew, that they alſo are without excuſe, as others that were before them.

Obj. Yea, but God denied them his ſpecial grace, which being denied, though they had done their utmoſt, they could never have improv'd their natural Light to diſcover Chriſt, who is the *only name given under heaven, whereby men muſt be ſaved,* Acts 4. 12. How then had they a ſufficiency of means?

Sol.

Sol. This argument is grounded upon a ſuppoſition, which the Apoſtle never takes notice of, even when he labours *ex profeſſo*, to prove the Gentiles juſtly liable to Gods wrath and condemnation. And therefore ſuch a ſuppoſition to me ſeems to be of no great force, though ſome take much notice of it in their diſputings. For my part, I have nothing to do with the controverſie that is among the learned, or with ſtating the queſtion between them. My deſign in this diſcourſe is only to remove a ſtumbling block out of the way of the blinde, that hinders too many from walking in the way of Gods Commandments. And this I may do (I hope) without engaging ſo far in the controverſie, as ſome others have done.

I am to prove, that 'tis not the want of means to be allowed on Gods part, but a wilfull neglect of means on mens part, that will be their condemnation: And hath not the Apoſtle ſaid enough to this purpoſe in the caſe of the Gentiles? *Rom.* 1. Yet let me argue a little: What will it avail thoſe Gentiles, or any the like, to ſay in the great day, By all the light which God did lend us, we could never have diſcovered the only way of Salvation? For may not God anſwer, What's that to you? It concern'd you not at all to enquire what would, or what would not be. I never told you, what I would, or would not do more, in caſe you had improv'd the talents which you had. I gave you the knowledge of my ſelf, and mine infinite excellencies ſo far, as to ſhew you a way of worſhipping me in a better manner, than under

der the resemblances of my meanest creatures. But you have buried your Talent, and rebelled against the Light you had, and therefore are wicked and idle servants. What is it to me, or any others, what God will, or will not do, in case we do our utmost with what we have? God, I am sure, is not, cannot be bound, farther than he is pleas'd to binde himself: And how far God hath bound himself to answer the improvement of natural gifts, by an addition of super-natural grace; if I have not learned, I suppose, I need not be ashamed. Scripture indeed saith, *That to him that hath it shall be given*, Luke 8.18. And reason shews, that the use of any gift natural, or spiritual, is a means to increase it. But seeing grace and nature are not of the same kinde, I confess my self ignorant, how far the improvement of nature will avail to the procuring of grace. And yet I dare not say, God will not give grace to such as improve nature to the utmost. For I know not what God will do, and so it is meet, I leave him to his liberty, as he hath left himself. I am bold to think, that such a supposition, as some make in this case, is almost to as little purpose, as that question, Whether the Son of God should have come in the flesh, if *Adam* had never sinn'd? This we are sure of, that the Gentiles, and others have their talents, more or less, and all to be improved accordingly; and if they be not, is God unrighteous in requiring what he hath given? The idle servant indeed charged his Master with austerity; but they trifle lamentably, who

Mat. 24.

there-

thereupon diſpute the vigour of Gods dealing with men, ſeeing it was not in the minde of Chriſt to note any ſuch auſterity, more than to commend uſury. Yet this is worthy our notice, that no ſervant made any complaint of his Maſter, beſides that idle one. For the ſcope and drift of the Parable, it is to ſhew (what is to my purpoſe) that they have no colour of excuſe in the leaſt, who ſtifle the gifts of God, and make no advantage of them: Yea, it proves clearly, and undeniably, that God will require of all according to the meaſure of their gifts, as you may ſee further confirmed, if you pleaſe to conſult, and compare *Epheſ.* 4. 7. 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. and *Luc.* 12. 48. For certain God will require no more than he hath given, and it is as certain he will require ſo much, and this is but reaſon. And now let any man that's but reaſonable reſolve, whether the verieſt Heathens, who had the leaſt means and helps, periſhed for lack of them, or for neglect of them: For to ſpeak as it is, they are condemn'd for abuſing their gifts, and chuſing to walk in darkneſs, when they had light to lead them into better wayes and practices.

Obj. But may not they ſay, Lord, if we had walkt by that light, it would not have ſerv'd for our everlaſting ſalvation?

Sol. And may not God ſtop their mouths by ſaying, What is it to you, whether it would have ſerv'd your turn or no? What did you know of what might, or would be? I gave you a ſtock to trade withall, and you have miſpent and waſted it. Why did not you that which

was your duty to do, in using what I had given you? You lacked nothing to that, but you had no mind to do what you might have done. You had light enough to convince you of your abominable Idolatries, but you would not be turned from them. You knew, or might have known, that I cannot be resembled by any of my Creatures, and yet you would needs worship me in the Images of men, and beasts, and birds, and creeping things. And now what can they say in reason, to be a sufficient excuse? They are condemn'd for their sinfull neglects, and not improving their talents: And is not their condemnation just? Whether what they had, would have gain'd eternal life, if they had done their utmost, will be no plea with God; but they will be found guilty, for not doing what they might have done, by the means they had. Take it, if you please, in a plain and familiar similitude. A Master gives his Servant a task, and so much light to do it: The Servant saith, the light he hath will not serve him to finish his task, and therefore never takes his Masters work in hand, or doth any part of it, but spends his light in doing nothing, or somewhat of his own business. I ask whether such a Servant may not justly be made to suffer? What was it to him, whether his light would serve for all his Masters work? He ought and should have done as much of it as his light would serve him for. Who knew he, whether his Master would not have supplied him with more light, if he had found him at work by the light which he had? I need not apply

this,

this, but only adde, that the Gentiles never had such a thought, as we suppose the Servant to have: But what light they had, they resolv'd to waste it, and never to regard their Masters work. Nay moreover, what if there was this in it too, that if they had had more light, they would have done as they did? Sure many have far more light, and do as bad as they. But I shall discourse this supposal no farther; the case, I hope, is clear enough, by what hath been said.

If any shall further pose me with the case of Infants, that never attain to years of discretion, I may truly and justly say, that this case is far beside the Question, as I have stated it. However, I shall not so pass it by, but give an account of my thoughts and apprehensions about it, after I have first proclaim'd my ignorance in those things, wherein God hath left me no manifestation of his mind and will.

That they are (as all *Adams* children) dead in trespasses and sins, and by nature the children of wrath, I verily believe, because *that which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, John 3. 6. so as they must be born again, ere they can see the Kingdom of God.

That they are capable of grace, and by consequence of glory, I also believe, because the Lord ordained and appointed such little ones, to receive the seal of the righteousness of faith. Gen. 17. 12. Ro. 4. 11.

But for their everlasting estate, it is to me (as I suppose to all others) a secret, so as I can resolve nothing. Only I incline to think,

that ſome of them are ſaved, and ſome periſh in their ſin. But who are the one, and who the other, who can ſay? One of the Antients (quoted and allowed by ſome of our eminent Divines) ſaith thus, viz. *It is even by Infants manifeſt, that many be not ſaved, not becauſe of themſelves, but becauſe God will not.* And that they periſh not for any actual, wilfull ſins, or rejecting the light either of grace or nature, we may (I ſuppoſe) juſtly and ſafely yield, becauſe they never uſe or exerciſe reaſon or diſcretion. Yet all of them being the Cockatrice Eggs, if they are ſome of them cruſh'd, and kill'd in the ſhell, there's no cauſe nor occaſion of queſtioning the judgement of God, ſince 'tis for ſin only they are condemn'd. May not the Lord uſe his liberty in puniſhing ſin ſometimes in ſuch young ſinners, ſo long as (we all grant it) they are of the Serpents brood? And now I am afraid to wade any further, leſt at next ſtep I ſhould be over head and ears. I ſhall therefore reſt in the Anſwer I gave at firſt, deſiring only, it may be conſider'd of, That God, who knoweth all moſt perfectly from eternity to eternity, cannot but know what thoſe caſtaway children would have done, if they had liv'd to years of diſcretion. But theſe are ſecrets, ſuch as I ſhould never meddle with, if I were not occaſioned to it by others curioſity. That ſome infants are ſaved, no man (I ſuppoſe) queſtions, as alſo that they are ſaved only by the grace of the Covenant in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Yet here is a ſecret of divine providence in governing the world, to cut off ſuch

Auſt. Ep. 107. ad Vital.

grafts

grafts newly implanted into Christ, so as they never grow to bear any fruit. But these (I say again) are secrets which belong unto the Lord: The revealed things belong unto us, & with these we ought to content our selves. And the same is to be said in the case before, *viz.* That some sinners die in infancy, others in youth, some in middle age, and others not till they are very old, and all perish, though all attain not to the same pitch of rebellion against the Lord. To say no more, in such cases, I must confess, I know not what to say, because I desire to be wise only according to what is written, and for the wayes of God in his providence, I had rather in silence adore them, than in pride and curiosity (as some) to pry into them.

If any shall object, that 'tis a glorious and singular priviledge to have the means of grace, as the *Jews* had above others, *Psal.* 147. 19, 20. *Rom.* 3. 1, 2. I grant it, and say also, that 'tis a most dreadfull calamity to want them. But this is no argument against what I have undertaken to prove, seeing God hath not left himself without witness towards all, so as they are without excuse upon this account, *viz.* Because they neglected, and no way improv'd the talents with which they were entrusted. God (as we see) gives some persons more wit, and others more wealth, *&c.* yet they who have less, are liable to accounts for what they have, because it is a trust, though less than some others have.

As for others, who are not as the Gentiles, nor as Infants, one would think the case, as to

them, were much clearer. For they have means as much as any ever had; and yet even these have somewhat to say for themselves.

Obj. True, we have the Gospel Preached to us, and plenty of precious means (as you call them) to know Christ: But to what purpose, so long as we are one way or other shut out, so as not one, nor all, nor any of these means shall ever have any effect on us for our salvation? For this purpose they alledge,

1. An absolute and irrecoverable decree of God, that shuts out more than shall be received in.
2. The narrowing of Christs death by some, as to the extent of it, that a great many may well think themselves uncapable of any benefit by it.
3. The lamentable estate of all men since *Adams* fall, under an invincible inability, to recover themselves from that estate, more than a dead man hath to raise and lift himself out of the dust.

These are the stumbling blocks which too many lay in heavens way, to hinder their own salvation; and I cannot pass them by, without using my endeavours to remove them. For these have been, and still are, unhappy occasions to many, of putting off all the blame from themselves, yea, and obliquely, by consequence at least, to charge God himself.

In answering these objections, I am no way bound to engage in the controversies that still are among the learned, nor shall I resolve one way or other to the prejudice of any party, but leave

leave them to end their quarrels as they can.

All the buſineſs I have to do, is to apply my ſelf to the capacities (and if the Lord ſo pleaſe, to reſolve the doubts) of thoſe that underſtand nothing, or very little of theſe matters, more than to make them ſo many ſtumbling-blocks, to hinder themſelves and others in their way to heaven, and ſad occaſions of bleſſing themſelves in their own hearts, whiles *they walk on in their own imaginations, to adde drunkenneſs to thirſt.* Deut. 29. 19. And now I come to Particulars after I have premiſed this one thing in general, *viz.* That let the decrees of God be as abſolute, as any of the learned have made them; or the death of Chriſt as much narrowed in the extent of it, as ever it hath been by any, yet my concluſion will ſtand firm, that men only are wanting to themſelves, and no charge in the leaſt can juſtly be laid upon God.

Sol. 1. In anſwering the firſt objection from Gods abſolute decrees, I ſhall ſay enough in this, that they are to us ſecret things, and cannot be known by us till the event declare them. We will ſuppoſe every mans name, who is certainly and infallibly ordained to eternal life, to be recorded, and all, and every of them, and no other to be ſaved. This, I ſay, we ſuppoſe, reſolving nothing in the queſtion: But this I ſay too, that if this be granted, yet there will be no excuſe by it for any ungodly men. And my reaſon is this, Becauſe no man can know himſelf left out of that Book of Life, till he comes to lye down under the power of death, and ſo

be past all possibility of working out his salvation. Whatever is said in Scripture of Gods electing some, and leaving others (take it in the strictest and most rigid sense of any) certainly no part of holy writ hath revealed to us, who those men are, so as we can know them. The day is yet to come, when the books of Gods decrees shall be opened: The written Word of God serves only to shew the revealed will of God, which if any man, without all exception,
Tit. 1. 2. be carefull to observe, he is sure of eternal Life, unless God fail of his promise, which indeed he cannot do.

Gods decrees are his *arcana imperii*, mysteries of state not to be pried into, but in all humility to be ador'd, because though never so secret, yet they are alwaies most righteous. In Kingdomes and Commonwealths on earth, Subjects have nothing to do with reasons of State, but are bound to obey the known Laws, which if they be careful to observe, they may justly expect to lead a peaceable and quiet life: *The*
Mic. 6 8. *Lord hath shewn thee, O man, what is good, and What he requireth of thee.* Be carefull to do this, and thou needst take no other care for thy Salvation; thou mayst assure thy self that thy name is written in the book of life. And for thy fuller assurance, consider what is clearly revealed in Scripture, *viz.* that the sentence of Life and Death shall pass at the last day, only according to what men have done, with respect to Gods Commandments. Hence we read so often in Scripture of Gods rewarding men according to their works, and according to what

they

they have done in the body. I need not quote the several Texts that are to this purpose. The grand inquest at the great day of the Lord, will not be, Whether thou art elected, or not, but whether thou hast observed to do as God hath commanded thee. If thou hast received the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is tendered to thee in the Gospel, and hast denied all ungodliness and worldlly lusts, and lived soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, there will be no question of thy Salvation in the world to come.

In suum exitium insaniunt quicunq; omisso Christo quidnam de se in arcano Dei consilio constitutum sit, inquirunt. Calv. in Ep. 1. Joan. c. 3. v. 20.

Sol. 2. I answer yet further, that Gods decrees (be they never so absolute and infallible) do no way in the least infringe the liberty of second causes, but men act as freely in all they do, as if there were no decrees at all: Suppose there was a decree of *Adams* fall (we assert nothing, but only suppose it) yet *Adam* was at liberty, whether to stand or fall. 'Twas never said by any sober man, that there was ever any decree, more than of permitting the fall of man. For certain, God did not force him to fall, or cast him down, but he might have stood if he would himself. The Reverend and learned *Davenant* (with others) so resolves, *That man fell according to Gods decree, but not because of it.* And the Schoolmen resolve unanimously, † *That Gods decrees do not infringe mans liberty.*

Non negamus decretum permissionis, &c.

Illud tamen arctè tenemus Adami peccatum non ab hoc decreto, sed secundum hoc decretum evenisse. Determinat. Qu. 35.

† *Decretam non tollit libertatem.*

Suppose

Suppose again all the actions of men to be under a decree, yet no man hath said, that mens actions, good and bad, are alike under it. For if they were, no man could possibly clear God from being the Author of sin: But there is this difference, that God decrees the good actions of men, so as to allow of them, yea, and to effect them by his grace and power; the evil only to permit them, to order and overrule them, for his most righteous and holy ends.

Alvares and others, conceive it impossible for us in our understanding to reconcile these two, *viz.* The absoluteness of Gods decree, and the liberty of mans will; but they say not, that they are inconsistent, and there is reason to shew they are not:

1. Because (as 'tis confessed by all) when the will of man determines it self to one thing, it doth not loose its liberty; but though it actually chuse one, yet even then it hath power to chuse another.

2. Gods decree doth not abolish, but only order mans liberty, by inclining the will one way or other, according to its nature.

3. The decree of God establisheth the liberty of mans will. For he so determines in his will, as the agency of second causes shall be according to their condition, *i. e.* Natural causes shall work naturally, voluntary causes, freely.

Though Gods decree excludes the act or event that's contrary to it, yet not the liberty of man to the contrary, as was said before. Moreover, God decrees, not only the things that are to be done, but also the manner how they shall

be

be done, either voluntarily, or neceſſarily. Now things are done neceſſarily or contingently, in reſpect to ſecond cauſes, not to the firſt, who worketh all moſt freely, according to the counſel of his will. And ſo, what God hath decreed to come to paſs by free agents, alwaies comes to paſs moſt freely. *Judas* was as free, and might have forborn to betray his Maſter, as if there never had been any thing foreſeen or foretold about it. And ſo were the Souldiers free to have broken Chriſts bones, as well as the others. Luc. 22. 22. Joan. 19. 33. 36.

I ſhall ſhut up this with what I find in one of ours, whoſe judgement I much value, as doth every one (I ſuppoſe) that's any way acquainted with his Writings. *Our adverſaries* (ſaith he) *belye us, when they ſay, our opinion touching Predeſtination, maketh us deny Free-will. For we think indeed our will is moved effectually by Gods will in all our actions: which being the moſt effectual and univerſal Cauſe of all things, qualifies our will, and inclines it to the action: yet doth it not follow hereupon, that therefore we think our own will hath no freedome, but only that the freedome thereof depends upon a former freedome, which is the freedome of Gods will. And if we hold further (as ſome Divines do) that Gods will determines ours, and his decree flows into all the effects of our will, ſo that we do nothing, but as he directs our will, and purpoſe; yet this excludes not our own freedome, nor makes God the Author of ſin, nor implyes any inevitable neceſſity in our doing. The reaſon is, becauſe God moves not our will violently enforcing it, but leaves* *Jo. White, The Way to the true Church, Sect. 40. Digreſſ. 41.*

leaves an inward motive within our ſelves, that ſtirs it up, which is the act of our Underſtanding, whereby we judge the things good or evil, that we will or nill. For in the proceeding of our will, Firſt, the mind apprehends ſome object, and offers it to the Will; Then upon the full and perfect judgement of the underſtanding, the Will follows, or refuſes it, as the underſtanding judges it good, or bad. And ſo this act, or judgement of our underſtanding, is the root, from whence the free choice of our will ariſeth, in ſuch manner, as whatſoever it be that goes before the act of our will, or ſets in with it to encline it (as Gods Will doth) as long as it deſtroyes not, nor enforces this practical judgement of reaſon, the liberty of our will is not taken away. And herein ſtands the true concord between Gods Predeſtination and mans Will, That the free and immutable counſel of Gods will, goeth indeed in order before the operation of our will, or at leaſt together with it, and determines and circumſcribes it. But for ſo much as it neither enforces our will, nor takes away our judgement, but permits it freely to lead and perſwade the will, it expels not our liberty, but rather cheriſhes and upholds it: For whereſoever theſe two concurr, viz. Freedome from violence and neceſſity, and the full conſent of Reaſon, there is the whole and true reaſon of Liberty.

Now I deſire, it may be obſerv'd, that this reverend and learned man ſaith only, *That ſome Divines* (not all) *do hold, that Gods will determines ours, and his decree flows into all the effects of our will*, &c. And indeed, it is yet a great queſtion (as well it may) with many,

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How farr the decree and unchangeable counsel of God doth determine our will about any thing we do. To me it is, and (I think) ever will be a mystery, as some profess it is to them; and therefore, from a matter so difficult and disputable, it is dangerous and desperate in any man to inferr, what is directly contradictory to his duty, so plainly laid before him in the written Word of God. For this is plain, and there can be no question about it: But the other (I say again) is to us very uncertain; and what some talk of Gods determining our wills, and all our actions, is very much question'd, and doubted of by others, and that for good reason, it being so mysterious, and so hard, if not impossible to be apprehended by us, as it is.

But whatever our Divines hold touching Predestination, *the meaning is not* (as that learned man in the place before cited hath it) *That God by his Providence infuseth any constraint into the mind of man to enforce it, or any errour to seduce it, or imposeth any necessity to bind it; but only that he enclines, and orders it to work freely, that which he hath determined for his own glory. And besides, his preserving the faculty thereof, moves and applyes it to the object, and work, that it willeth, or willeth.* And all this is no more, than that mans Will is subject to Gods Providence, which no sober man will deny, or question.

But to reason the case more familiarly; 1. Let men ask themselves, Whether they do not freely and willingly chuse their own ungodly wayes, and they cannot (I am sure) lay to

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the contrary. For their Consciences will tell them, that in all their ungodly wayes, they only consult to satisfie their lusts, and never have one thought of what God hath decreed.

I ask further, 2. Whether any man can possibly act in a way of wickedness, with a respect to the fulfilling of Gods decrees, seeing no man can know, what those decrees are? We read indeed, *Act.* 4. 27, 28. *That* Herod *and* Pilate, *&c. did what the hand and counsel of God had determined before-hand.* Yea, the Devil himself, in all his doings, is within the compass of Gods counsel, else what sad work would he make in the world? But how can a man act, so, as to intend his action, according to that which he knows not, nor doth ever consider of? What is it to any ungodly man, what God hath decreed, when he resolves with himself, that he will do according to his will, and serve his lusts, whatever God hath said to the contrary? That it falls out according to the counsel of God, is beside, and against his intention, who walks only after his own counsels: And so he doth whatever he doth, wickedly of choice, and freely. How can it be otherwise? For he doth it gladly, and he rejoyceth to do evil. *Free-will (as one hath observ'd) is so farr from being lost in a sinner, as that all, who sin with delight and pleasure, do more especially sin by their Free-will.* 'Tis not the absolute decree of God, that swayes them to their ungodly courses; but they delight in their abominations, and sin, and dye in their sin, because they freely chuse so to do.

Nihil magis subest libero arbitrio quam quod ab eo fluit libenter, & gaudenter. Parisiensis.

I need say no more to this, if men would speak what they know by themselves. God

God is not so much (if I may so say) beholden to them, that they should do any thing for his sake. They do not damn their Souls, to fullfil his will, but their own lust. They talk indeed sometimes (as men do in their sleep) of they know not what themselves, What God hath decreed must be, and there's no avoiding it: But they do not serve their lusts, with any respect to Gods decree, more than *Judas*, who in selling his Master, look'd at nothing but the money that was to be gain'd by the bargain.

To shew more plainly, how little there is to be had from Gods decrees, to excuse ungodly men, consider, That all who had an hand, or heart in the death of Christ, were therein guilty of most horrible sin, though they did what the hand and counsel of God had determined before, *Act.* 4. 27, 28. and *Act.* 2. 23. Though he were delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, yet was he crucified and slain by wicked hands. Whereas *Joseph*, a Counsellour, *was a good man, and a just, though he consented not to the counsel and deed of them that slew Christ*: Yea, therein he proved himself a good, and a just man; whereas if he had acted, or consented, as others did, he had been guilty, as farr as they.

Sol. 3. No man sober, and in his senses, ever said, or thought, that men are damn'd, because God hath decreed them to be damn'd. Scripture (I am sure) speaks another reason of mens damnation *Death is the wages of sin*, Ro. 6. 23. *Tribulation and anguish upon the Soul of*

every

every man that doth evil, Ro. 2. 8. *God shall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,* 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8. *The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God,* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. And in this place we have a Catalogue of them who shall be damn'd; as also *Eph.* 5. 5, 6. where, after the naming of some, as *whoremongers, unclean persons, that shall not inherit the Kingdom of Christ, and of God,* v. 6. the Apostle gives this caution, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things, cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* For these, and such as these, Fornication, Adultery, and all Uncleanness, Drunkenness, and prophane Swearing, *&c.* for these men are damn'd. There's no notice taken of Gods decree, as the cause or occasion of mens damnation. They on Christs left hand, at the last day, plead indeed, that if they were faulty, it was unwittingly, and they were not aware of it: but not one word of Gods decree, fore-ordaining them unavoidably to damnation, as some men plead now. And as wise as they count themselves, I am confident, they will see better at the last day, and know, that their own evil wayes, and doings, and not Gods decrees, brought death and destruction upon them. Indeed, God never passed any decree to condemn any man, but for his sin and impenitency; of which, if he be not found guilty, I know of no decree of God to damn him. But as we say of some men, for their excessive feeding, that they digg their graves with their own teeth: So we

may

may say of others, for their inordinate living, that they digg their Hell with their own hands. They are damn'd for nothing, but their wickednes, wherein they were incorrigible, and would not be reclaimed. Would ungodly ones repent, and reform, and chuse the wayes of Gods Commandements, they would answer this Objection to better purpose, than I, or any man else can. And yet this I'le warrant them, upon no worse ground than Gods Word, that if they repent, and cast away all their transgressions, there is no decree of God shall rise up in judgement to condemn them.

But for the further clearing of this 3d. Answer, I shall add somewhat out of some of the Ancients. *God may save a man, without his merits, because he is good: But he cannot damn a man, without his demerits, because he is just.* For (as another hath it) *When God shews mercy, and pardons, he gives of his own, and doth it of himself: But when he condemns, and punishes, he could not be righteous, if there were not something in us to deserve it.* How farr God may use his absolute Soveraign power, and Prerogative-Royal, in exposing the most innocent creature to suffer torments, I have no mind to dispute, though I am not wholly ignorant, of what some have discoursed about it once; this I am confident of, that God never dealt so with any of his creatures, nor ever will, *Lam.* 3. 33. He doth not afflict willingly, &c. His bounty and kindness floweth from him freely of it self: His severity ariseth from somewhat in us. True, he inflicted the greatest torments, that ever were, upon

Potest Deus sine bonis meritis liberare, quia bonus est: Non potest quemquam sine malis meritis damnare, quia justus est. August. Ep. 104. *Deus de suo bonus est, de nostro justus.* Tertul. de Resur. Carn.

on his own Son, who was in himself more innocent and unspotted than any Angel. But the reason is obvious. The Son of God voluntarily engaged himself to be surety for sinful man, and so by his own act and deed contracted a debt, which he was bound to pay upon that account, and not otherwise.

And now, though I have said so much, I must yet say more, in answer to this first Objection. For it will be said,

Obj. That where there is an absolute Decree (as some hold) there is an impossibility, for some at least, to escape damnation. And though God damn no man, but for his sin; yet the event is infallible, so as they who are not under the decree of Election, must needs be damn'd however.

Davenant against Hoard.

Sol. 1. *We know no Decree, leaving men destitute of all such Grace, as would save them,* if themselves were not in fault.

Sol. 2. All necessity is not inconsistent with mans liberty, but he may be said to chuse his own destruction, notwithstanding any such decree. When a man is doing any thing, it is necessary, because he cannot do, and not do at once. But when he is in doing, he hath still his liberty, not to have done it, or to have done otherwise. Though there be a necessity of the Consequence, there is none of the Consequent. And if there be any force in this Argument, then by the same reason, God must be ignorant, who shall be saved, and who damn'd. For let it be granted, that God knows precisely, who shall be saved, and who damn'd, there is an unavoid-

Omne quod est, quando est, necesse est.

able

able neceſſity of the event accordingly, or God muſt not be omniſcient, and infallible.

Obj. If any object, A knowledge in God, whereby he foreſees things to come, not abſolutely, but conditionally, what men, or Angels may do, by the freedome of their will, (no decree of God going before) conſidering them in ſuch and ſuch a condition, with ſuch and ſuch circumſtances.

Sol. I anſwer, That God knows ſuch conditional things abſolutely and perfectly, though they never take effect. So he foreſaw, that *Abimelech* would have defiled *Sarah*, and therefore hindred him. Gen 20 3.

He knew certainly, that the men of *Keilah* would have delivered up *David*, and therefore prevented it, by ſending *David* away. 1 Sam. 23.

He ſaw the people would repent, when they ſhould ſee War, and return into *Egypt*, and therefore led them about by another way. Ex. 13. 17.

Theſe were things that ſhould come to paſs in caſe only, if they had not been prevented, and yet God knew them abſolutely and certainly. For an Hypothetical may be true in the connection and conſequence, though it be falſe in both the parts of it. *Saul* came not down, nor was *David* delivered up to him; yet this was true, that if *Saul* had come down, the *Keilites* would have delivered up *David*: And this God knew abſolutely and infallibly. And as certainly doth God know, what wicked men will do, if he leave them to themſelves, and what will be the end of them; and cannot, by reaſon of his infinite underſtanding, be puzzled (as we poor creatures are) with conditionalities. Now if

he certainly knows the end of ungodly men, (whatever his decree be) the event must be according, or God is not infallible in his foreknowledge.

I would also be answer'd in this, *viz.* Why men quarrel so much with the decrees of God, in the matters and concernments of their Souls, and never make any question about them in other things? Why do they dress, and plow, and sow their Land, and never question, what God hath decreed about the harvest? For, I hope, all men will grant, that when they have us'd their utmost skill and endeavour in Husbandry, they may yet carry out much, and bring in little, and perhaps nothing. Else, Why do they say their Prayers, and begg of God their daily bread? I take it for granted also, if they pray at all, they pray for grace to do Gods will, and to keep that way, wherein they may have eternal life. And do not they in these Prayers acknowledge, that whatever their endeavours are, the end and event of all is from God only? Now here is somewhat which I cannot sufficiently wonder at, *viz.* That men will neglect no means, likely to effect their ends, in and about civil and worldly affairs; and yet in the matters of their Souls, will not be perswaded to use the means which God hath appointed, pretending they know not what God hath decreed. No man saith, Let my Land lie fallow as it is, I'le not be at the trouble or charge to plow or sow: If God have so decreed, I shall have a good harvest however. Or if any man should so argue, and make no improvement of his Estate, but come to beg-

gery,

gery, his Neighbour-good husbands will not be much puzzled, to give a reason of it. They will say presently, He might have maintain'd himself as well as they, if he would have been a good husband. For they find by experience, that by their pains in manuring their Land, they have enough to live upon; and whiles they do what belongs to them, and leave the issue to God, he is not wanting to them, in his blessing upon their endeavours. I need not apply this to the present case, whoever reads, may do it.

I shall therefore proceed to tell thee, whoever thou art that replies't, or disputes't so much in this case, That Gods Decree (whatever it be) never excludes, but always implies the use of means on our part, for obtaining our desired ends. Thou knowes't not the number of thy dayes, and yet wilt not forbear thy daily bread, and say, I shall live so long as God hath determined: Nor wilt thou, for that reason, stabb thy self at the heart. Why wilt thou be so perverse, as to argue so unreasonably about thy Soul, and Salvation, when thou never dost so about any thing else, that concerns thee never so little.

But 'tis no hard matter to know the reason; and these men might easily see it, if they had but a mind to it. They are wedded (as we say) to their wills, and resolv'd to serve their lusts: And being thus resolv'd, they are asham'd to own so base a design; and therefore set their wits on work, to find out somewhat, that may serve to set a fair gloss upon their unworthy and base practices. And this will one day be found

to be so indeed, however they state the question now. They love their sins, and will not leave them, though they lose their Souls: But they would not have others think so of them; nor can they abide to reason it alone, with their Consciences in cool blood. Hence they consider, how they may lay the blame some where beside themselves, and rather than fail, let God himself bear it, though of all others he least deserves it. This, and nothing else, causes all the adoe, that's made in the world about Gods Decrees.

But learn in time, O vain men, whoever you are, that so quarrel: For God will easily wipe off all these aspersions, and needs not for your sakes, to lay aside his infinite excellencies. What! must God have no certain fore-knowledge of things future, nor any disposing hand or counsel over and about his Creatures, but presently they must rise up, and say, He hath determin'd them by an infallible decree, (no less in effect, than to say) he hath enforc'd them against their wills, to do wickedly, and to damn themselves for ever? I tell thee, in Gods name, whoever thou art, whatever God hath decreed, (for that I determine not) Life and Death are before thee, and thou art free to chuse which thou wilt. He doth indeed order and over-rule thee, in all thou dost: How else should he be, what he is? But he doth not compel, or enforce thee to any thing; but leaves thee to act, as a reasonable Creature, according to thine own choice, as I shall hereafter shew in my Answers to the third grand Objection.

What hath been said in answer to this first,

may ſuffice, I hope, to ſatisfie ſuch as have indeed a mind to ſave their Souls. For ſuch as will not leave tampering with Gods Decrees, in hope to find ſome colour for their impenitency, and obſtinacy in ſin, I ſhall leave them to try it out with God, when he ſhall come to judge the World, in aſſured confidence he will then plead his own cauſe, as they ſhall have nothing to anſwer.

The ſecond great Objection againſt my Concluſion, may be thus formed.

Obj. 2. IF Chriſt died not for all, and every man, (as many ſay) then God hath not ſufficiently provided for all mens Salvation: But Chriſt died not for all, *&c. Ergo, &c.*

The force and ſtrength of this Argument lieth on this, That our Salvation depends upon Chriſts Satisfaction for us. Hence it follows, That if Chriſt, by his Death, have not ſatisfied for a great many, they are left to periſh, for want of that proviſion, and ſo they are not to be blam'd, though they die in their ſins.

Sol. The Diſpute, that hath been, and ſtill is, about the extent of Chriſts death, I ſhall not meddle with, ſo as to determine any thing one way, or other, becauſe I hope to do my work, without engaging my ſelf ſo farr. For Gods intent and counſel in delivering his Son to death, and Chriſts intention in undergoing death, they are to me, and (I ſuppoſe) to others alſo,

hidden, ſo as we cannot ſay, For theſe Chriſt died, and not for thoſe. It belongs to Gods will of purpoſe, whatever it be, and therefore we cannot reſolve any thing about it. For Gods will of precept, we know what it is, *viz. He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved; and he that believeth not, ſhall be damned*, Marc. 16. 16. This is the Goſpel, which Chriſt before his Aſcenſion charg'd his Apoſtles to preach, and I know of no other, *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, Joan. 3. 16. This Goſpel I believe with all my heart, becauſe I never find in Scripture, that men are condemn'd, becauſe no price was paid for them, but only for unbelief. *Heb.* 3. 19. *So we ſee, they could not enter in, becauſe of unbeleef.* An evil heart of unbelief, is all they are warn'd to beware of, *v.* 12. *vid.* alſo *Heb.* 10. *fin.* with many places beſides in the New Teſtament, which I need not cite. Hence I am bold to reſolve, That no man lieth under a neceſſity of periſhing in his ſin, who lives and dies not in unbelief: Or thus, That Chriſt died, and ſatisfied ſo farr, as whoſoever believeth, ſhall be ſaved; and that men ſhall be damn'd, only upon the account of unbelief. For this (I ſay again) is the Goſpel we are bound to preach; and this is the Goſpel, according to which God will judge the World. In that day, the queſtion will not be, Whether we were of the number, for whom Chriſt died; we ſhall be queſtion'd only, Why we did not believe in Chriſt, offer'd to us in the Goſpel.

Quest. But here it will be ask'd by some, Whether they, who never had the Gospel preached to them, as we, and many others have had it, shall be condemn'd for not believing on Christ, whom they never heard of?

Sol. 1. I dare not say (as some) That if they had improv'd their natural knowledge of God to the utmost, they might have been say'd by the kindness and mercy of God, without the knowledge of Christ the Mediator, because the Scripture saith, *There is no other Name given under Heaven, &c. Act.* 4. 12.

2. Whatever the account be, upon which they perish, the Apostle hath resolv'd in terms, *Ro.* 1. 20. That they are inexcusable.

3. I am not able to apprehend, How Gods Works of Creation, as Sun, Moon, and Stars, *&c.* did preach Christ to them.

4. I shall only offer somewhat, wherein I dare not be peremptory, but shall leave it to the consideration of such as are judicious, *viz.* That the Heathen of old, who had not the Law of God, as *Israel* had; yet heard the report and fame of the God of *Israel*, and thereupon ought to have enquir'd after him, the only living and true God, who alone is to be praised, and served in such wayes, as he himself hath appointed. And the rather, because by their natural light, they might have discover'd, that what they worshipp'd, could not be God, and that the true God cannot be worshipp'd by mens hands, *Act.* 17. 25. That which first enclined and encouraged me to this conceit (as most may count it) was, what the Apostle hath said of *Rahab*, *Heb.*

Israelites fuerunt depositarii, & Oeconomi fœderis, Calvin in Rom: c: 3: v: 2: i: e: They had the honour and favour to carry the light, which others were bound to follow.

Heb. 11. 31. *By Faith the Harlot* Rahab *perished not, with them that believed not*, &c. Here are two things, which I desire may be observed concerning her. 1. Her Faith, which was no less than a justifying, saving Faith; else her Name had not been enroll'd amongst those Worthies, that are there recorded. And *Jac.* 2.25. She is said, to be justified, in the same manner, as *Abraham* was. 2. That she came by her Faith, only by the report she heard of the God of *Israel*, as she professeth; *Josh.* 2. 11. *The Lord your God, he is God in Heaven above, and in* Earth *beneath.* And *v.* 9,10. She professeth, She had heard, what God had done for *Israel*, such as no other God could do; and for this cause she desired to joyn her self to the people of the God of *Abraham*, and to have her lot with them. And so doing, *She perished not with those that believed not.* Who were they? Questionless her Neighbours, the men of *Jericho*, and all the *Amorites* (except the *Gibeonites*) who, notwithstanding they heard the same things reported, resolved to fight it out against God, and his people *Israel.* And did not the *Gibeonites* the same? *Josh.* 9. 24. For they so answered for themselves, when *Joshua* questioned them: *It was certainly told thy servants, How that the Lord thy God commanded his servant* Moses *to give you all the Land, and to destroy all the Inhabitants of the Land from before you; therefore we were afraid of our lives, because of you, and have done this thing.* What they did, the rest of the *Canaanites* should have done, and have been content to be hewers of wood, &c. that so they

Heb. 11. 31.

might

might serve and worship the living and true God. Sure, the rest of the Inhabitants of *Canaan* heard and knew as much as the *Gibeonites* did; but they hardned their hearts, and so perished in their unbelief. We read also of the *Kenites, who were the children of* Hobab, *the Father in Law of* Moses, who chose to joyn themselves to the *Israelites*; and why might not others have done the like? And may not the Queen of *Sheba* be an instance to the same purpose? Read the Story, 1 *Reg.* 10. and *Mat.* 12. 42. And why should not the *Syrians* all believe, as well as *Naaman*, 2 *Reg.* 5. seeing they knew as well as he, the miracle which the God of *Israel* had wrought upon him? Questionless, that and other miracles were done to convince the Heathen. Judic. 4. 11.

Once this is clear and certain, That the *Jews* were a people hated of all other Nations, and that upon this account only, because *their Laws were different from all people*, Ester 3. 8. How should they be otherwise? For they were the Laws of *Jehovah*, the living and true God, condemning all the Idolatries, and superstitious Vanities of the Heathen. But the Heathen should not therefore have hated the *Israelites*, as they did; but rather have cast away their abominations, and sought, and served the God of *Israel*, as he had commanded. Questionless the spite of all other Nations against *Israel*, was the old hatred, that is in all men by nature, against God, and all that is of God. It might be said of the *Israelites* then, as some of them said of the Christians afterward: *They were a Sect* (or sort of people) Act. 28. 22.

people) *every where spoken against.* Now it could never have been so, but that the *Gentiles* had heard of the *Israelites* way of worshipping the Lord *Jehovah*, and yet hated them upon that account. And do not all Nations, at this day, hear the report of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do not *Turks* and *Tartars* know the God of the Christians, and blaspheme him? So do Infidel-*Jews*, and all the Pagans at this day in *Asia*, *Africa* and *America*; and yet they enquire not after him, care not to own, or serve him; but still worship the works of their own hands, yea, (to speak with Scripture) Devils. May we not therefore say, *Have they not heard? Yes verily, the sound of Christ, and the Gospel, is gone out into all the earth.*

Ro. 10. 18.

Quest. If any shall yet quarrel Gods Dispensations towards the *Gentiles*, both of old, and now adayes, because the light of Gospel-truth is not alike imparted to all, by an equal proportion of means; For that end,

Sol. I shall ask them, Whether God may not take the same liberty, that men do many times, and yet are no way questioned for it? Must he be tied up, and bound to terms, such as we our selves would not? May not he take, and use his liberty, in the dispensing of his own gifts, specially when he leaves none without witness? I wish men would read and meditate on *Mat.* 20. 15. where you may see, how ill the Lord takes it, to be questioned and quarrelled in that inequality, which seems to be so to us. What if God see, that if they had more light and means than we, and some others have, that they would

rebel

rebel the more, as we, and many others do? Is it not enough, to make them inexcuſable, that they hear, where Life and Salvation is to be had? Sure, they cannot ſay truly, They have not heard. They hear (for ought I know) as much as *Rahab* did; and they muſt ſay, if they ſpeak truth, We have heard of Jeſus Chriſt, but we did not like him, to believe in him, as the Chriſtians do. And may they not then be ſaid to periſh, as the men of *Jericho*, *Heb.* 11. 31. *Who believed not?* They ſhould have given credit to thoſe common and confeſſed reports of God, and his wonderful works for his people: But they deſpiſed them, as light news, and refuſed to be at the pains of any further enquiry after God. And for this they are charged with Unbelief, as *Rahab*, on the contrary, is commended for her Faith. And do not the *Turks* and Heathen now the ſame, or the like?

I have yet one thing more to offer, *viz.* That the *Gentiles* of old, who were a people farr off, had wilfully ſeparated themſelves from *Noah's* and *Shem's* Families, in which the worſhip of God was preſerved, and kept pure for a while: And ſo did others, before the Flood, ſeparate themſelves; and therefore in their Idolatries (unto which they were given up) received the recompence of their errour, that was meet; God moſt righteouſly puniſhing the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children in after-ages, by leaving them without the means of grace and knowledge, which ſome others had. And yet (as you heard before, he left not himſelf without ſufficient witneſs againſt them.

But

But the chief design of this Discourse being to shew, How inexcusable they are, who have the light of Gospel-truth, but do not walk in it; I shall proceed to enquire into the case of these, that turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into wantonness, some way or other receiving it in vain. For these (I say again) do not perish for want of a Remedy, but only for not applying it.

For proof hereof, I appeal to *Joan* 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish.* Here's enough said, to shew, That God is not wanting to men, but that they are wanting to themselves. There's provision made, such, and so much, as none can perish, but they who refuse to make use of it. *Whosoever believeth on him, shall have everlasting life.* What can be said or done more on Gods part? What constructions are made of this Scripture by many, I shall not mention, but shall give the sense of *Calvin* upon it. "The Love of God "here testified (*saith he*) respects *Humanum* "*genus*, mankind; and a note of universality is "added, to invite all promiscuously to the par-"taking of this life, and to cut off all excuse "(*observe that*) from such as believe not. For "this purpose (*saith he*) the word [WORLD] "is used, to shew, that though there be nothing "in the World worthy of Gods love and favour; "yet to shew himself gracious to the whole "World, he calls all without exception to the "Faith of Christ. Indeed he saith too, That life "eternal is offer'd unto all, so as notwithstand-

"ing

"ing Faith is not of all. And in this he confeſſeth, the ſpecial grace of God to ſome particular perſons.

Let it alſo be conſidered, That the word [WORLD] cannot rationally be taken in any other ſenſe. For in the next Verſe, it is meant of the World, whereof ſome are ſaved, and ſome periſh, (as Reverend *Davenant* obſerves) and that they who periſh, periſh only becauſe they believe not on the Son of God. I ſhall not debate, what advantage the coming of Chriſt into the World brought to ſuch, as make no uſe, reap no benefit by it. Certainly it ſtates the queſtion beyond all diſpute, That as Faith only ſaves, ſo Unbelief only condemns, which is all I have to prove. For there's not the leaſt hint of any defect on Gods part, but all the fault is laid on man alone, in not believing on the Son of God ſent into the World, not to condemn, but to ſave it. And here let *Calvin* ſpeak what he thought in this caſe: *Certum quidem eſt, non omnes ex Chriſti morte fructum percipere: Sed hoc ideo fit, quia eos impedit ſua incredulitas.* In Ep. ad Heb. cap. 9. v. 27. 'Tis only by Infidelity, that all are not partakers of the benefits of Chriſts death.

Let me now argue a little further, Why do we perſwade all men, without exception, to believe on Chriſt, with a promiſe of Salvation by him, if they believe? Is it reaſonable to do ſo, if we are not perſwaded, there is ſufficient proviſion made, ſo as nothing is wanting, if there be Faith to receive it? As I take it, we ſhould not perſwade men to believe on Chriſt, by telling them,

them, If they believe, then Christ died for them: Rather, as I suppose, we may safely tell them, That Christ died for them, and thereupon perswade them, to believe on him. We are bound to believe, that the thing is true, before we can believe our share in it. The Object is in order of Nature, before the Action. My belief makes not a thing true, but it is true in it self, and therefore I believe it. And this is the method of Scripture, as farr as I know. The Feast was first prepared, and then the Guests were invited: *All things are ready, come unto the Marriage*, Mat. 22. 4. The *Jews*, who are the guests there invited, refus'd to come: But were they not cast utterly off, and put into that condition, wherein they abide unto this day, upon this account, That the Son of God *came to his* Joan. 1. 11 *own, and his own received him not*? How could they refuse, if there were no provision made for them? Or justly perish only for refusing? I am very willing to believe, That Christ was offer'd for me, before he was offer'd to me; and that, if I dye in my sins, it is only for my not receiving Christ offered to me. Sure I am, that Scripture never layeth the death of Sinners, upon the want of a λύτρον, or Price of Redemption; but alwayes upon unbelief, disobedience, neglect of, and setting light by Christ, and the things of Christ. And this is enough to serve my turn, That Scripture never hints any impediment to mens Salvation, more than an evil heart of unbelief. For the intention of God, and Christ, what is that to me, or any man else, seeing it is secret? The revealed things belong to us; and

we

we shall (for certain) be question'd one day only, Why we did not accept of Christ, when he was tendred to us? It will not then excuse us, to say, We could not tell, whether we were of those, whom Christ intended to save. Once we have the command of God, to believe on the Son of God, and we have a sure promise, if we believe, to be saved. And this, and nothing else, will be the condemnation of the World, *viz.* That they disobeyed Gods command, and believed not his promise.

Thus all Gods Messengers have a Warrant to invite all men to believe. But not to invite the Devil, though they had an opportunity to speak with him, as any man may speak to another. Yea, I am bold to think, it would be any mans sin, to promise Salvation to the Devil, upon his believing in Christ. It were indeed a belying the Lord, and saying, He saith, what he hath not said. And it were a deceiving the Devil, in telling him, that which is not so. For the consequence of this Hypothetical [If thou believest on the Son of God, thou shalt be saved] is true, as to any man, without exception: But as to the Devil, it is (for ought I know) false in the connexion, as well as in the parts of it; because he is none of those, to whom God hath promis'd Salvation, upon condition of believing on Christ, *Joan.* 3.16. For the Command of God to believe, and his Promise of Life upon believing, is all the ground-work upon which our Faith is built; and this foundation the Devil hath not, for his warrant and encouragement to believe on the Son of God. *For the Son of God took*

took not on him, or took not hold on, or helped not the Angels, Heb. 2. 16. *but the Seed of Abraham*. Where [*Abrahams* Seed] notes not the *Jews* only (as all will grant) but the *Gentiles* also; and that expreſſion is us'd, to ſhew, that Chriſt was the ſame, that was promis'd to the Fathers; and ſets out the benefit of Redemption, as belonging to mankind, but not (if I may ſo ſpeak) to Devil-kind.

Beſide, It is not the Devils Sin, not to believe on Chriſt, or not to receive him: He hath ſin enough beſides, both for number and nature, and queſtionleſs is a greater ſinner, than any man can be; having ſinn'd himſelf out of the greateſt happineſs (and that in actual poſſeſſion) that a Creature is capable of, and againſt that Light, which no man on earth can attain unto. But Unbelief is not his ſin; becauſe there is no command obliging, nor any promiſe inviting him to believe on Chriſt. But Unbelief is the ſin of men, yea it is in a manner all ſin, as it ſeals upon a man his other ſins, and cauſeth *the wrath of God to abide upon him*, *Joan.* 3. *fin.* Yea, it is the great aggravation of all ſins in this reſpect, that they might have been all pardon'd, on ſuch eaſie terms, as *Believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*.

We may now beſpeak ſinners, as *Naamans* ſervants beſpake him: *If the Prophet had commanded thee ſome great matter, wouldſt thou not have done it*, &c. So, if God had requir'd ſome great matter of us, for our Salvation, ſhould we not willingly have done it? But 'tis a very eaſie thing, that he requireth us to do.

2 Reg. 5.

The word is nigh us, as the Apostle shews, Rom. 10. 8. We have nothing to do, or suffer, for the appeasing of Gods Wrath, or for the satisfying of his Justice, or for purchasing the heavenly Inheritance. The Son of God, in our flesh, hath done and suffered all; and we have nothing to do, but to receive him, as he is freely tendered and offer'd to us. The Feast is prepared, without any cost or care of ours; and we are called to partake of it, with a sure promise of welcome.

All this while I forget not, what a controversie there is among the Learned, about the extent of Christs death, but I dare not meddle with it, and the rather, because it concerns me, in the main design of this Book, I have no controversie, but with the hardness and wilfullness of sinners, who endeavour to make God the Author, both of their condemnation; and pretend, That if God would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as they are requir'd, they should not however be saved. These are the men I now deal with, and these I desire to try, (whatever is controverted amongst the more Learned) whether this be not a truth, *viz.* That Christ hath satisfied so farr, as they shall be saved, if they believe. And to these I say, if they dye in their sins, it is not upon the account of Christs not dying for them, but only for their not-believing on him. And for this I appeal to the whole tenour of Scripture, and in particular to *Joan.* 3. 16. where the gift of Christ is common, but the efficacy of it limited to believing. And good reason

why, since Christ dyed for none, to save them whether they believe, or not.

'Tis neither my design, nor desire, to dispute with any, but with unreasonable and wicked men. And therefore I shall take no notice, of what is commonly said, *viz.* That Christ dyed in the stead, and sustain'd the persons of all, unto whom the benefit of his Death was intended. Only I say, If a summ be paid, sufficient to redeem so many poor Captives, provided they shall all their dayes serve him that is their Redeemer; are they not all redeem'd, though some should refuse the condition, and chuse to be Slaves still? However, this I affirm, That the extent of Christs Death is such, and so great, as I never read, or heard of any one, that perished in his sin, because Christ had paid no price for his Redemption. For the tenour of the Gospel, I gave it before, and I have never learnt any other, than, *That he that believeth,* Marc. 16. 16. *shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Let others dispute, for whom Christ dyed, (I cannot hinder them) I am sure Christ never suffered or satisfied for any, so as they shall have the saving benefits of his death, without laying hold on him by a lively Faith. And I shall be as sure, on the other side, That whoever shall believe on the Lord Jesus, with all his heart, he shall be saved by him. And this I take to be found Doctrine, that may be safely preached to all, and every one, without exception, *viz.* Thou, O man, whoever thou art, Christ dyed for thee; and if thou believe on him, with all thine heart, as God hath commanded thee, thou

thou ſhalt be ſaved. In this we preach the tenour of the Goſpel, as you have it before; and he that thus preacheth Chriſt, will give little encouragement to ſinners, except to repent, and turn to God; and ſo all ſinners ſhould by all means be encouraged. But here is no encouragement to impenitency, or unbelief, becauſe there's no promiſe of any benefit by Chriſts death, but only to true believers, and penitents. This then I reſolve, That if I, or any other, dye in our ſins, it is only, becauſe we believe not on the Son of God. For of a truth, I know not how to clear and juſtifie God, (as I deſire to do) if any thing done, or not done on his part, be it, that ſhuts us out from having eternal Life. I am (I confeſs) altogether for this, That a wicked, proud, filthy, evil heart of unbelief, and nothing elſe, ſtands in the way of mens Salvation; and if that be once taken away, there will be no other hinderance. I have ſuch thoughts of God, as I cannot think, but he hath done his part, ſo as nothing will be wanting, if we are but heartily willing to do ours.

I could indeed ſay (what is ſufficient in this caſe) That no man knows, or can know, (ſuppoſing Chriſts death to be ſo confin'd, as ſome will have it) Whether he be one of thoſe, for whom Chriſt dyed not. And therefore, if it were an adventure, a man had better run the hazard, than do worſe, by wilfull ſhipwracking himſelf, through final impenitency and unbelief. As a man (one would think) ſhould not refuſe to caſt the Dice for his Life, though he knew for certain, that ſome or other muſt dye; and he

cannot be ſure, that he ſhall not be one of them. Only (I ſay ſtill) there's no hazard in believing on Chriſt,

But in this I deſire to be reſolv'd, Whether he that beileves not on Chriſt offered in the Goſpel, doth not refuſe a fair offer of ſomewhat that he might have had, if he had believed? This is no Poſition, but only a Quære. If it be anſwered, That Unbelievers are damn'd for not-obeying Gods Command, and for not-believing his Promiſe, I grant, it is ſo, and their condemnation, upon that account, is moſt juſt: Only give me leave to think ſtill, That ſuch refuſe, what they might have receiv'd, and ſo are guilty, as they were, who *made light of the invitation*, Mat. 22. 5. *and went their wayes.* They might have ſhar'd in the wedding Feaſt, as well as others, if they would have come. And therefore I wiſh all, whom it may concern, to be very wary, that poor ignorant Souls, who are too much bent, and ſet upon undoing themſelves, may have no occaſion given them of ſo doing. For what danger can there be, in ſaying indifferently, what Scripture ſaith often *in terminis*, and ſo preſſing all to believe on him? Herein they will remove a ſtumbling-block, which otherwiſe many will ſet up, to caſt themſelves down. But there is no occaſion of ſtumbling, unleſs they preach and teach, what they never learn'd from Scripture, *viz.* That Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſome for all, live as they liſt, and do as they pleaſe, their Redemption is purchas'd, and they are ſure to be ſaved however. This indeed would be falſe Doctrine, with a witneſs,

witneſs, yea, and a vengeance too upon many. But no poor Souls will ever complain of their Miniſters, for telling them the good news of Chriſts dying for them, ſo long as they tell them withall, How the Death of Chriſt will be effectual to them, and not otherwiſe, *viz.* by a ſound, and a working Faith.

For the Queſtion about abſolute and conditional Redemption, I am not wholly ignorant of it: But I ſtill reſolve to wave all controverſies of that nature, and only reaſon the caſe with poor Souls, that they may not caſt themſelves away in their perverſe diſputings, about they know not what; and in their wilfull neglecting of that Salvation, which they are ſure to obtain, in a way of believing, and obeying God, and not otherwiſe. To theſe I ſay again, that which is the Word of God, who cannot lye: Let them repent of their unlawful deeds, deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, lead ſober, and righteous, and godly lives; and therein give a ſure evidence and proof of their reall cloſing with, and accepting of Chriſt by Faith, that they ſhall be as certainly ſaved, as any that are now in Heaven. For this is indeed Goſpel, and this is the Word of Grace, as they may eaſily read, if they will but open their Bibles. But they may turn over their Bibles long enough, or ever they find any Text to this purpoſe, That Chriſt dyed to ſave them, though they never believe. *Paul* and *Silas* told the Jaylor, *Act.* 16. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* They never ſcrupled, Whether he were one of them, for whom Chriſt dyed; but preached to

him the Gospel, as they had received it of the Lord: And he doing, as he was commanded, had forthwith as much as he desired, or needed.

Before I close up this, I shall add one thing more. Is there any man alive, of whom any other can, or dare say, This is one of them, for whom Christ dyed not? If there be not, then make no difference, where thou knowest none; but be wise according to that which is written. This we may all safely resolve upon, We shall never suffer at Gods hand, for our ignorance, or neglect of any thing, that God hath not revealed in his Word. *The things that are revealed, belong unto us*, &c. These we are to believe, and obey, and so live. And if there be any man excepted in the Act of Pardon, except Unbelievers, and that only for their unbelief, it is more than I ever read of, or could learn by reading the Bible.

Deut 29 29.

The third great Objection Answered.

Obj. 3. WHat is all this that you have said, of Christs dying for us, in case we believe, so long as we have no power of our selves to believe, or do any thing, towards the working out of our Salvation? Alas! We would fain relieve our selves, and rise out of the misery we lye under; but we are insufficient of our selves to do any thing; and thus we have been alwayes taught by our Ministers. Now it being

thus

thus with us, whose fault is it, if we perish, and die in our sins?

Sol. Let the fault lye where it will, I hope to make it certain and clear, that it lyeth not on Gods part; yea more, that it lyeth only on our part.

1. If I say, There is no inability in sinful men, but what they have brought upon themselves, I suppose, much is said, for the clearing of God in this case: And this is most certainly true, but I shall not insist upon it, because there is much more to be said, and more to our purpose.

2. I say, in Answer to this grand Objection, That there is no inability in man to repent, and believe in Christ, and to bring forth good fruits, such as become Repentance and Faith, which he might not put off, if he himself would. And if this be made good, I suppose, the Objection from mans inability, will have little force in it.

That man hath brought himself into a miserable incapacity, there is no question; and that the Devil helps to keep him under it, is as unquestionable: But that man may put it off, if he will, may seem at first to be strange, however I hope anon to prove it true.

For the insufficiency and inability of a natural man to all, or any spiritual good, I am (I hope) as much as any man else, can justly and reasonably be, and I hope to shew my perswasion in this sufficiently, by what I have to say. Only I am impatient to hear some discourse (as sometimes they do) of mans inability by nature, as if it were a natural and necessary, more than a sinful infirmity.

To

To prevent all misprision of me in this point, I profess my unfeigned Faith in these Particulars, *viz. That no man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him*, Joan. 6. 44. *That Christ dyed for us, when we were weak*, Ro. 5. 6. So weak, as if he had not lifted us up by his power, we should never have risen again. I know and acknowledge, *That the carnal mind is enmity to the Law of God, and cannot be subject*, till God circumcise the heart, and take away the stone out of it. I willingly grant, *That God works in us, both to will, and to do*, Philip. 2. 13. That he begins, continues, increases, and accomplishes the work of his grace in all his people. Nor have I any quarrel against any, that cry down the ability of man by nature; for I am fully and wholly with them, if they will say (as I) That mans weakness is also his wickedness: As our Law also determines, that there is *Infirmitas*, as well as *Necessitas culpabilis*.

Ro. 8. 7.

Here it will be said, That every one saith as much. And I take it for a satisfying answer, so as we shall not further quarrel about it. All that I aim at, is this, That they that understand, would express themselves in this, so as vain and foolish men may not please themselves, in a misconceit of their natural infirmity and weakness, as if it were not their wickedness, and they were to be pitied only, but not blam'd for it, or (at most) not very much. For thus, or to this purpose, many will discourse upon occasion;

We have not (as Papists report us) turn'd men into beasts or stones, by taking away Free-will; but acknowledge it so farr, as to make all sinners excusable before Gods judgement seat. *Jo White, Way to the true Church, Sect.* 40.

That

That as farr as God ſhall give them grace, and wherewithall, they are not, and they will not be wanting in their endeavours, to do the beſt they can. They are by nature, and of themſelves, able to do little, or nothing, that good is; and wiſh it were otherwiſe, but how can they help it? They have a good heart and will; but they want ſtrength to do what they deſire. And what is this, but a favouring themſelves, with a kind of reflection upon God, as if he were wanting in ſomewhat; and that they might do better, if he had done his part?

Beſides, I am not ignorant, what an Argument is urg'd by ſome, upon this ground of pleading mans natural inability, and what anſwer there is to anſwer it; when (I think) one word would be enough to choak it, as I hope to ſhew anon.

Now, for the ſatisfaction of all theſe, I grant, There is a lamentable inability in every man by nature; But this I contend for, That man hath a Liberty alſo, which he ſhews abundantly, upon all occaſions, and never more, than in his ſin, and his reſiſting God, in all the ſaving methods uſed for bringing him to repentance. Whatever inability he hath, (and let him make as much as he can of it) he hath a liberty too, ſo much, as he doth moſt freely chuſe all the ungodly wayes, wherein he walks. And this I intend to diſcourſe a while, in anſwer to the third Objection.

I do not mean by Free-will a power in man to will good and evil alike.

Nor do I ſet Free-will againſt the grace of God, as Papiſts do.

To ſay, That a man by nature hath Free-will, may ſeem ſtrange to ſome; but it is true however;

ever; and no disparagement at all to the free grace of God, but serves to make all flesh inexcusable before Gods Judgement seat.

To clear this, we must distinguish, as *Zanchy*, and others do, between the nature, and the power of mans Free will. And to this purpose speaks *Zanchy*, in *Tractat. de lib. arbit. cap. 6. If we respect the nature of Free-will in man, it is alwayes free: But if we consider the power of it, it is a servant to sin, and can of it self do nothing but sin.* And to this purpose he cites *August. Tom. 3. in Enchirid. ad Laurent. cap. 30. Man using his Free-will amiss, or abusing it, lost both himself, and it. And therefore learned men teach, † That mans will is rather a slave than free. Yet the same men, with one consent, write, That the will of every man, whether good or evil, is alwayes free; so as whatever he wills, whether good or evil, he wills it freely, and without force.* And then again he cites *August. Tom. 7. contra Jul. Pelag. lib. 1. cap. 2. Free-will is so farr from being lost in a sinner, as by it all do sin, specially such as sin with delight*, &c. And then he prosecutes this Thesis, † *That man after his fall, though he became a servant of sin, hath not lost all his liberty, but still retains that which is natural.* And this is nothing else, than what the Greek Fathers call αὐτεξουσιον, which imports a man to be *Sui juris* *, as every man is to

Liberum arbitrium per peccatum factum est servum. Liberum arbitrium semper liberum est, non semper bonum.

† *Libera est homini voluntas, sed ad malum.* Aust. contr. Pelag. Ep. lib 1.

* *Per illud peccant qui eum delectione peccant.*

† *Serva voluntas est, quae propter corruptionem sub malorum cupiditatum imperio captiva tenetur, ut nihil quam malum eligere possit, etiamsi id sponte, & libenter faciat.* Calv. de lib. arb.

* Free-will is the operation of the will, in chusing, or refusing, what the judgement of our understanding offereth.

the

the elicite acts of his will, wherein he cannot be forc'd, Absolute freedome of will is properly in God, who can neither be compell'd, nor yet order'd, or over-wrought by any other: But we give it to man, so farr, as he is free from all force and compulsion. So any man uses his Free-will, as often, as according to the judgement of his own reason, he chuses that which seems best to him; not forc'd by any principle without, but freely inclin'd by a principle within him. This then is the worst of my meaning, That a Sinner is a reasonable Creature, and follows the determination of his own reason and judgement, in what he doth. And if man have not this liberty, I know not how he can be a sinner. He hath indeed no good will to what is of God, but the best part of him is enmity against it, *Ro. 8. 7.* Yet he retains his *Liberum arbitrium*, though he hath lost *Facultatem ad bonum. The imaginations of mans heart, since the fall, are only and continually evil* *. He hates the good, and loves the evil, but both freely. † *We have not lost the Free-will, but our Good-will.* Indeed we have too much Free-will, unless we could use it better; and this will be our condemnation, that we so willingly and wilfully refused the good, and chose the evil. * We cannot now will that which is our only good, but we freely and willingly refuse it. Man alone hath cast himself

Nos non alibi statuimus peccandi necessitatem, quam invitio voluntatis, [illegible] spontaneam esse ipsam sequitur. Calv. de lib. arb. *Ex hoc enim quod [illegible] liberam [illegible] habet ad opposita voluntas in utrumque potest.* Aq. 12. Qu. 6. a. *Solum id quod habet intellectum potest agere judicio libero in quantum cognoscit universalem rationem bonis ex quâ potest judicare hoc, vel illud esse bonum* Aqu. p. 2. q. 59. c. 3. * Gen: 6: 5: † *Non amisimus naturam, sed gratiam.* * *Voluntas in naturâ, &c. à bono potest declinare, ut faciat malem, quod fit libero arbitrio: Et à malo, ut faciat bonum, quod non fit sine divino adjutorio:* August: de Civit: lib: 15. c: 21.

down;

down: But he cannot alone raise himself up again. *It is God that worketh in us, to will, and to do*, Philip. 2. 13. And in this *we are his workmanship*, Eph. 2. 10.

Therefore one hath resolv'd in this case (to my thinking) as well as can be: *Take away Grace, and there's nothing to save: Take away Free-will, there's nothing to be sav'd.* God gives all grace to all; but he gives not grace to any, but reasonable creatures. And when he gives that grace, which effectually changeth the heart, he no way infringeth mans liberty. For though it be granted, That God working the will to determine it self, it must determine accordingly; yet Gods working takes not from mans will the power of dissenting, and doing the contrary; for it inclineth it, as having liberty to do otherwise, yet it actually determineth one way, and not another. So mans Free-will is still preserv'd, and without it, I know not, how he can do anything commendable, or blameable. For what any man is enforc'd unto, is not his good, nor evil. *Paul* saith indeed, That *he compell'd some to blaspheme*, Act. 26. 11. Which cannot be understood otherwise, than that he used all rigour and extremity to draw and drive them to it. But they were not purely compell'd, if so, the sin had been his, and not theirs. But they chose to blaspheme, rather than suffer; and this was their sin, which they would have avoided, had they been sound in the Faith, as those Worthies mentioned *Heb.* 11. Though perhaps *Paul* speaks more his own endeavour, than the event or effect of it upon others.

Here

Here by the way observe, What a great delusion there is in the World, in and about this particular, *viz.* If men be strongly tempted to sin, by any sore penalty threatned, and ready to be inflicted, they presently call it a [Force] and perswade themselves, the sin is only theirs, who compell'd them to it. This is a delusion, for no man can be forc'd to sin, though he may be strongly tempted more wayes than one. For so farr as a man is forced, he doth not sin.

The force of Temptation may make a man do what else he would not: As a storm causes the Mariners sometimes to cast their lading overboard. But the Casuists resolve all [illegible] of this kind, to be more free, than others. Men would not indeed do such things, if there were not some weighty consideration [illegible] them; yet they are not compell'd, for they might do otherwise.

A man may be purely forc'd to do something that he would not; but his will cannot be forced without destroying the nature of it. As farr as a man wills or nills any thing, he wills or nills it freely, though the will hath (as most think) a necessary dependance in its elicite acts, upon the understanding.

Obj. But though the Will be thus free, yet there is an unavoidable necessity on every man, in his natural estate, so as he cannot but sin in all he doth; *For a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, Luc. 6. 43. *A man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. 2. 1. Can a dead man raise himself to life again? *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots &c.*

spots? Then may ye also do good, who are accustomed to do evil, Jer. 13. 23.

Sol. For what is urg'd from Scripture, I am farr from gainsaying it, because it contradicts not me, in saying, That every man sins willingly and wilfully. A man by nature is dead in sin, and say, The spiritually dead can no more raise themselves to life, than they who are naturally and corporally dead; Yet know, there is a vaste difference between the one, and the other. He that is spiritually dead, hath a will: But the naturally dead, hath none at all. The spiritually dead, shews a wicked will, in resisting the means used for his recovery; Whereas he that's naturally dead, cannot be said to be unwilling to rise again. A man in his sin is as a sick man; yet the sick in body, and the sick in soul, are not in all alike. A man sick in body, would with all his heart rise, if he could; and keeps his Bed only, because he is forc'd to it, and cannot sit up. A Soul-sick man, let him be, as you will have him, I am sure, is as unwilling, as he is unable to rise. He is indeed like the Sluggard, that will not rise, because of cold, finding his Bed warm and easie. So is a sinner, in his sinful condition, he loves and likes it, and is loth to change. Nay, he will quarrel any one, that goes about to rouze or raise him; he will not endure any rebukes for sin, but loves it, so as to hate any, that would divorce him from it. Nor is he as a block, or a beast: He sees what is good, as God hath shewed it him, and he abhorrs it, and chuses to abide in the condition wherein he is, as best for him.

And

And thus Scripture ſpeaks of mans weakneſs, as his wickedneſs, and his infirmity is his iniquity too. Take him as he is, and you will find him thus: He cannot will that whith is good, becauſe he will not: His [CAN] and his [WILL] being all one. Such is his natural bent to evil, that he voluntarily chuſeth it, and refuſeth the good. And now let any man judge, Whether ſuch an inability can be any excuſe for ſin, it being at moſt but a moral Impotency (as we call it) and not a natural.

Hence (methinks) I cannot make good ſenſe of what ſome are wont to ſay, That they would repent, if they could. I ſuppoſe, it would be more ſenſe, to ſay, They would repent, if they would. For certain, If a man be heartily willing to repent, there is nothing left to hinder his repentance. *A ſerious and inſtant will to repent and believe, includes in it the hatred of ſin, and a purpoſe of not ſinning. He that truly deſires to repent, doth indeed repent, becauſe he hates his own evil wayes.*

Perkins of Gods free grace, and mans free-will.

I grant it willingly, That no man can turn to God, without the grace of God; but that is all one, as to ſay, No man will turn to God, without the grace of God. For there is nothing that hinders him, but his wicked, froward will. A man may have a charitable diſpoſition, and be heartily willing to relieve others in their neceſſities, and yet may not, becauſe he hath not wherewithall to do it. His heart may be large, when his eſtate is ſtrait enough. And in this caſe, the will is accepted for the deed. For almes-deeds are imperate, outward acts, wherein the

will cannot ſway all; and therefore it may be rationally ſaid of ſuch a man, He would with all his heart, if he could. But to repent and believe are elicite, inward, immediate acts of the will, and are not exerciſed by another power, as the imperate are. *With the heart man believeth*, and with the heart man repenteth. There is, I grant, an outward reformation of the life, which is a fruit of Repentance; but Repentance is a root in the heart, and when a man is changed, ſo as to hate the evil, and love the good: Or when ever a man of unwilling, is made willing, then he repents. And therefore it cannot be ſaid with good ſenſe, Men would repent, if they could. There's more ſenſe, and truth too, in ſaying, Men could repent, if they would. To ſay, *I am willing to repent, but I cannot*; is all one, as to ſay, *I am willing to repent, but I will not*. I may be willing to work, or to walk; but becauſe I am ſick and weak in body, I cannot. But if I am willing to repent and believe, the work is done: For theſe are the immediate acts of my will.

Ro. 10.

Obj. But ſome may object, That many gracious Souls may heartily deſire, what they cannot do; and Divines commonly reſolve, That good deſires are accepted with God, when there are failings in the performance.

Sol. I fully accord with all thoſe Divines in this, and ſay; That the beſt on earth are defective in doing what they deſire: Their deſires are indeed beyond what they are able to do. They would pray with more fervency, and ardent affection; they would hear with more attention

tention and intention, than they do; and this is their great burden, that they cannot do as they would. But it muſt be conſidered too, That they are defective in their deſires alſo, and then we may ſoon anſwer, what is here objected, *viz.* That as to the immediate acts of the will, they cannot what they would. For they would love God more than they do; and it is their burden, that they love him no more: And bleſſed (ſay I) are all ſuch poor Souls, and I wiſh there were more of ſuch in the world. For too many (I fear) think they love God well enough, and that in this, they are not wanting. But to anſwer the Objection, conſider,

1. That the fervency of the Saints love to God, is much allayed by many things without them, ſuch as are unavoidable to them, whiles they are in fleſh.

2. All the defects of their love, and other ſpiritual affections, are from the imperfection of the work of grace; their wills being not ſo throughly ſanctified, but that there is fleſh luſting againſt the ſpirit. Hence, when *the ſpirit is willing, the fleſh is weak*, ſo as they cannot do what they would. They cannot love God ſo, as they would love him. But this makes nothing againſt what I ſaid before. For ſo farr as they are ſanctified, they are willing; but ſo farr as they are fleſh, they are not ſo. The ſpirit makes them willing, to what the fleſh will not ſuffer them: and this is their burden, that they have ſo much of the body of death in and about them. But I ſay again, ſo farr as a mans heart is renewed, ſo farr he loves God; and the im- Mat. 26. 41.

perfection of his love, is from the defects of his will, not throughly and perfectly sanctified and changed. But still I am to seek, and cannot imagine, how any man can be willing to love God, and not actually love him at all, as certainly they that are carnally minded, do not. A man may not love God, so much as he would, and I have given a reason why. But I cannot apprehend, how a man can be willing to love God, and not love him at all. And the case is all one in Faith and Repentance. A man by nature loves not Christ, but loves his sin; and this makes him distaste the terms, upon which Christ is offered to him; and he is unwilling to believe on him, because of the old hatred. This natural old enmity makes him unwilling to close with Christ; but if that were once cured, he would forthwith believe, to the saving of his Soul. Now if it be mans enmity (as indeed it is) that makes him unable, consider, I pray, how farr such an inability will excuse. I never heard, that any man was an enemy to another, against his will. There's no Vertue, or Gift of God in us, without our wills; and in every good act, Gods grace, and mans will concurr. *The voice of the corrupt will of man, is, I do that which is evil, and I will do it: I do not that which is good, and I will not do it.*

Perkins of Gods free-grace, and mans free-will.

That which keeps men fast bound in the cords of their sins, is the frowardness of a wicked heart, wilfully chusing to walk on in their ungodly wayes, and refusing all means of reclaiming them.

Quest.

Queſt. But how ſhall that enmity and wilfullneſs be removed? Or is it their fault, that it abides upon them? It hath been preach'd for ſound Doctrine, That a man can never repent, or believe, till God circumciſe the heart, and take away the ſtony heart, and give a new heart, and a new ſpirit.

Sol. And I do allow of this Doctrine with all my heart. But what then? All this will not clear us, if we do not repent. For our ſin is never the leſs ſinful, becauſe (as I ſaid before) we love it, and will by no means part with it. I ſubſcribe to what *Luther* ſaith: *Impius lubenti voluntate malum facit, & hæc eſt voluntas: Verum hanc lubentiam faciendi malum, non poteſt omittere, aut coercere, & hæc eſt neceſſitas.* I know well, that the infirmity of a natural man is great upon him, and invincible to any thing, but Almighty grace. But I know too, that a natural man loves his ſin with all his heart, and reſolves to ſerve his luſts, and will not be perſwaded to renounce them. And for the wayes of God, he hates and ſcorns them, and will not walk in them; Yea, and doth what he can, to keep up the old hatred, reſiſting all the aſſaults, that are made upon him, for the ſubduing of him to the obedience of Chriſts Laws. What think you? Is not every wicked man free, in making all the oppoſition that he can, againſt the means of his converſion? And now let any man ask himſelf, Whoſe fault it is, that he is an enemy to God, and the wayes of godlineſs: Or that he chuſeth the wayes of death, when he is often and earneſtly invited to walk in the way

Luth. de ſerv. arbit.

that leadeth unto life? What kind of queſtion is this? I wonder men are not aſhamed to ask, How the enmity of their hearts againſt God ſhall be removed? They may anſwer themſelves if they pleaſe, thus, That they love their luſts, and for their luſts ſake they cannot abide Gods Laws. I ask them therefore in the Name of God, and let them anſwer as they ſhould, or (I aſſure them) they ſhall anſwer one day as they would not: Why do not all you prophane, ungodly, debauched men, leave your wicked wayes; and why are you ſo unwilling to leave them? Why do you ſlight, and ſet at naught, ſcorn and deride the wayes of God and godlineſs? I hope you will bluſh to ſay, You are forc'd to do ſo, when your hearts know, you take pleaſure in ſo doing. Is it not your delight and paſtime to do wickedly? And are not the wayes of God, the things you abhorr, and cannot abide? Are you reaſonable men, and can you ſay or think, you are neceſſitated and compell'd to take theſe vain and wicked courſes, when your own hearts know, you love them, and chuſe them, and will not be perſwaded to the contrary?

Hence I ſay further, That I cannot believe, God will damn any man, for doing that, which he was heartily unwilling to have done, but could not, or was not able to refrain. I believe alſo, That God will damn no man, for not doing the good, which he was heartily willing to have done, but could not. And I believe, all men

Nec; enim ſic neceſſariò peccare impios dicimus quin voluntariâ deliberatâ que malitiâ peccent. Calvin de lib. arb. contra Pighium, in 2. lib.

ſhall

ſhall be condemn'd for this, That they would not walk in Gods wayes, and for that they would goe on in their own wayes. And if the whole tenour of Scripture ſpeak not this, I may be aſham'd to underſtand it no better. And to ſay no more, I confeſs my ſelf unable to conceive, the righteouſneſs of God in his Judgements, if he ſhould paſs ſentence of death and condemnation upon any poor Souls, that have been ſincerely willing to do what he commanded, and only wanted ſtrength and ability to do it. *The natural man cannot know ſpiritual things*: But 'tis alſo ſaid, They are fooliſhneſs to him, and he ſcorns them. 1 Cor. 2. 14.

As to what is alledged from *Jer.* 13.23. I anſwer, There is ſo great a diſſimilitude, as the Argument *a Simili* will not hold, to prove what is pretended. The *Æthiopian*, though he be never ſo willing, cannot change his skin. Hence we ſay of a man that labours in vain, that he is waſhing a *Blackmore*. And the *Leopards* ſpots are of the ſame nature. But the wickedneſs of the wicked is not ſo. I am apt to think, many a *Blackmore* would be made white, if he could; But no wicked man is willing to be made clean. I have heard indeed (how true it is I know not) that the blackeſt *Æthiopians* with them, are the beauties, even as the faireſt are with us. Now if a *Blackmore* might change his skin, and would not, I ſhould think him to be a juſt and fit reſemblance of ungodly ſinners. For theſe *Æthiopians* (as I may call them) are not willing to change their skins: Such black Souls will not be made white. Nay, the blacker they are, the Obj. from *Jer.* 13. anſwer'd.

Jer: 9: 6: They have taught, &c. i. e. enured, or accuſtomed themſelves, they have got ſuch an habit and cuſtome of ſinning, that they cannot leave it.

better they ſeem in their own eyes; and the deeper they are dipt in that dye, the more they are pleas'd with their black hue. And let it be obſerv'd, what that Text hath *in terminis*: *How can ye that are accuſtomed*, &c. Or, *Ye that have learnt, and are inſtructed*? For the Original hath in it the notion of teaching or learning. They had enur'd themſelves to do evil. Old Sinners accuſtom'd to their wicked wayes, are as one that hath learnt what he cannot forget. And yet if a man learn any thing that's bad and baſe, he is never the more commended, nor yet the leſs blam'd, becauſe he cannot forget it. A cuſtome in evil is farr worſe, than the firſt ſingle act of ſin.

And I have yet one Conſideration more, that will clear this matter beyond all exception, and it is this, That the more unable any man is to repent, the more hateſull he is in the ſight of God. Cuſtome in ſin, draws a cruſt upon Conſcience, hardens the heart, and makes a man more unable to repent. And will any man ſay, That ſuch an obdurate Sinner, is therefore the more excuſable? Nay, he is the more abominable, even for that reaſon, in the ſight of God and man. The more ſick and weak in body any one is, the more he is pitied, becauſe men know, he would be better if he could, and is glad to hear of any good means to recover him. But we cannot ſo pity Sinners, that have an hard and impenitent heart; but account them therefore the greater Sinners, becauſe they cannot repent. They cannot indeed, becauſe they will not; and their greater inability is nothing, but

their

their greater obſtinacy and malignity; ſo as the beſt that can be made of it, is no more, than if a Thief ſhould plead for himſelf at the barr, That he hath been us'd to filching and ſtealing ſo long, as he cannot leave it. The ſame Plea it is for any man to ſay, I have ſinn'd ſo long, and am ſo much hardned, as I cannot repent. And though every Sinner be not alike hardned in ſin, yet every one hath the ſame inclination, which by frequent and continued exerciſe, will become a cuſtome. For the difference of Sinners is much in degrees; and if the impotency of an old Sinner be no plea, neither will the impotency of any.

Obj. If any yet ſay, It is no fault of ours, that we are ſo much inclin'd to evil, and ſo averſe to God, and all that's good,

Sol. I hope they will remember, *That God made man righteous*, or upright, *Eccl. 7. ult.* And that we are now born in ſin, is the corruption of our nature, for which we are beholden to our ſelves, as much as *Adam* was to himſelf, for his firſt tranſgreſſion, and falling from God. For we ſinn'd as well as he, and then contracted the guilt and filth we now lye under, even before we are born. And ſo much the Apoſtle averrs plainly, *Ro.* 5. 12. which if it be denied, all the Apoſtles Argument in that place, to prove the Lord Chriſt to be our Righteouſneſs, will be of little force, or rather none at all, as I conceive, with ſubmiſſion to better judgements.

[They] i. e: Mankind: It was not *Adams* ſin alone; ſo ſome underſtand it.

Obj. If it be ſaid, Man had never fallen at firſt, if God had not left him to himſelf?

Sol. I anſwer, That God did not firſt leave man, but man firſt left God; and judge, if it were

Posse quod voluit. *Velle quod potuit:*

were not so: For God gave him a power to stand, if he himself would: If he gave him not a will to use that power, is God to be faulted for that? Would you have God to make him unchangeable?

Obj. But Man might have stood unmoveable, though he had not been made unchangeable, if God had upheld him, as he did the elect Angels.

Sol. No question, but God could, and might have upheld him; but he was not pleased so to do. And yet he is not to be charged with the fall of man. For he gave him sufficient power and strength to stand, if he would, and was not this enough? If a Father gives his Son a stock of Money, or an Estate, whereupon he may live comfortably, by his good management of it; and the Son do (as we read of one *Luc.* 15.) spend and waste all, and come to beggery; can any man justly say, the Father did not his part for his Sons good? What would men have of God? Or what they make of him? God made Man a glorious Creature, and gave him a reasonable Soul, and liberty to chuse for himself, such as no other earthly Creature had. And when God had made him a reasonable Creature, He dealt with, and by him, as became the nature and quality of such a Creature. If God had divested Man of his Liberty, he had abas'd his Nature below it self, and indeed made him to be no Man, or reasonable Creature.

Obj. But God might have preserv'd him in the estate, wherein he was first made, holy and righteous.

Sol.

Sol. What will men make of God? We read how ill God takes it, to be *thought such a one as we are*, Pſal. 50. 21. The men that argue thus, do much worſe. For they would make God to be ſuch, as they themſelves would not be. They will not be tyed up to the wills of other men, (though perhaps better than themſelves) in every tranſaction, or concernment of their own. They will ſay, Why ſhould we be bound to them? Theſe are our own concernments, and why ſhould we give others an account of them? May not we do with our own, as we will? And no man queſtions ſuch men for their doings, ſpecially ſo long, as nothing is done, but what is comely and equall. But when the great and mighty God doth any thing like, and diſpoſeth of his Creatures with infinite wiſdome, vain men will preſently queſtion, Why doth he ſo? Let any man ſhew any the leaſt unrighteouſneſs in God, or that man could not have preſerved himſelf, in that bleſſed eſtate, wherein God had ſet him, and then they ſay ſomewhat. But the contrary is moſt certain and true, *viz.* That Man might, and ſhould have been happy, if he had not wilfully caſt himſelf away. And therefore, *Why doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſin? Let us ſearch and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts, with our hands, unto God in the Heavens. We have tranſgreſſed and rebelled, and thou haſt not pardoned*, Lam. 3. 39, 40, 41, 42. Nothing becomes us in our ſinfull condition, ſo well as ſuch a confeſſion. Do we believe, there is a God that made us, and dare we queſti-

on

on his dealings, as if he puniſh'd us upon any account, but our tranſgreſſions? *Surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgement*, Job 34. 12. And *v.* 11. You have an Argument for it: *The work of a man ſhall he render unto him, and cauſe every man to find according to his wayes.* Had man continued in his obedience, ; or being fallen, humbled himſelf, and then God had rejected him, there might have been ſuppos'd ſome occaſion of complaining. But it is quite otherwiſe: For God ran after man, when man had run away from him; and provided for his recovery, to a more bleſſed and glorious eſtate, when he could think of nothing, but a few figg-leaves to cover his ſhame. And God is ſtill reaching out his merciful armes, to lay hold on him, inviting and wooing him, and never refuſeth any Soul, that turns to him; and what would men have more?

Obj. But if it be ſaid, I cannot, in the caſe I am, turn my ſelf:

Sol. I ſay thou lyeſt in what thou ſayeſt: For, to ſpeak as it is, thou art not willing to turn unto the Lord; and this, and nothing elſe, will be thy condemnation in the great day of account *. There is a price paid, and a purchaſe made, and thou art invited to come, and take poſſeſſion of it. But thou hadſt rather abide where thou art, and holdeſt thy ſins as Sweet-meats under thy tongue, and wilt not let them goe, though thou haſt been often told, they will be the bane of thy Soul. And how dar'ſt thou ſay, Thou canſt not turn thy ſelf; when God, and thine own Heart, and the World too, know, thou art enamour'd

* *Cæſſet voluntas propria, & non erit Infernus*: There would be no Hell, but for our wicked will.

mour'd on thy ſin, and haſt ſuch a liking to it, as thou wilt by no means be perſwaded to part with it? Wilt thou wilfully proſecute thy ſinful deſigns and courſes, and ſet thine heart upon thine iniquity, and ſay, Thou canſt not turn from it? For ſhame ſpeak ſenſe, and talk no more ſo abſurdly. Will a man be at coſt and pains to ſerve and feed his luſts, and he not love them? And if thou love them, they have thy will; and when thou art willing to part with them (I ſay) heartily willing, the work of Converſion is done. But whilſt thou art not willing to part with thy luſts, ſay as it is, *I will not, I will not.* Say the truth, for ſo it is. Thou hadſt rather part with thy Soul for ever, than part with the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon. Thou delighteſt in thy own wayes, and art one of them that *ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* Job 21.14 It is not with ungodly ones, as they pretend: For they chuſe their own wayes, and when they eat the fruits of them, they are but filled with their own devices. They firſt ſow iniquity, and then reap ſhame and miſery. When they goe down to Hell, they goe where they had a mind to be. They have been often and earneſtly call'd upon, to pity and favour their poor Souls, but they would not be perſwaded. How many a Sinner hath parted with his life for his luſts ſake? And all do ſo, as to their Souls. If men would ſtudy Scripture more, and ſearch their own hearts more, than they do, they would ſoon anſwer their own Arguments. Let me now commend to them one place, *viz.* *Pro.* 1. from *v.* 20. to the

the end of the Chapter; and let them consider, what the wisdome of God judgeth, concerning the wicked wayes of men. And O! that men would read, and weigh our Saviours words, *Joan.* 3. 19, 20. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* Christ, and his Word, and all his Ordinances, are a Light; and wicked men, like Thieves, cannot abide them, because they would not be discovered by them. This is the judgement, that Scripture passeth upon ungodly men; and if they would pass the same, and so judge and condemn themselves, they might find peace in approaching to God. But to argue and whartle about the wayes of Gods Providence and Grace, as if they were not equal; when God, and their own hearts know, they are passionately in love with, yea and madd upon their Idols, I mean their Lusts; and loose practices; this will turn to no good account one day, whatever men count of now. They that are so apt to quarrel God, should rather call themselves to an account; and if they would be exact in this work, we should have more complaints of themselves, that their own wayes are unequal, and all the wayes of God most equal, and just, and good. To shut up this, I shall only mention one Text, *Pro.* 8. 36. *All that hate me, love death.* They are the words that were spoken by the infinite and eternal Wisdome of God; who saith as much in effect, *Joan.* 3. 19, 20. before cited; Wicked men love darkness, and death. They are not damn'd (as they pretend) to Sin and

Hell

Hell againſt their wills; but they love them, and chuſe them, when they might forbear and avoid them. They love their Sins, and therefore hate their Souls: They love Sin, and in ſo doing love Death: They are willing to be damn'd, as willing (for certain) as a man that wittingly takes Poyſon, is willing to kill himſelf.

Non appetitu naturali, aut per electionem, ſed in naturâ. Aquin.

Obj. But ſome will ſay, That few are ſo willfull, till God hardens them, and makes them to erre from his wayes, *Eſay* 63. 17.

Sol. For Gods making men to erre, *&c.* I think the Learned Annotator hath rightly obſerv'd, That the Original notes only a permiſſion, and therefore might be rendred, *why doſt thou ſuffer us to wander out of thy wayes? For God tempteth no man to ſin,* Jac. 1. 13, 14. *But a man is led away by his own luſt.* And how did God harden *Pharaoh?* No other way, than by delivering him up, and leaving him to the hardneſs of his own obſtinate heart, by Gods forbearance and mercy, more and further obdurated, as is to be ſeen in the Story. God doth thus harden others, and leave them to themſelves; and then it is ſad with them, as it is with a Child left to himſelf, *Pro.* 29. 15. But when is it? Even when they give themſelves up to ſerve their own deſires, and reſolve to walk after their luſts, hating to be reformed, and caſting Gods Word behind them, as is to be ſeen, *Pſa.* 81. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. This is cleared from *Pſa.* 95. 8. *Harden not your heart.* On which place *Calvin*: *Non ex alio fonte manare noſtram adverſus Deum rebellionem, quam ex voluntaria improbitate dum illius gratiæ aditum obſtruimus.*

Calv.

Calv. *i. e.* Our rebellion againſt God, flows from no other fountain, than our own perverſneſs, whilſt we ſhut up the paſſage to his grace, that it cannot enter.

One thing more, that may be objected, muſt be anſwer'd, and 'tis this:

Obj. That the ſpecial Grace of God puts the laſt difference between man and man (as ſome ſay) and that Grace is not given to all. How then can it be ſaid, That God hath ſufficiently provided for all? Or how can he be clear'd, in his condemning ſome, ſeeing theſe alſo would have repented, and cloſed with Chriſt, if the Lord had perſwaded, and over-power'd them, by his effectual Grace, as he did others?

Sol. And yet God will clear himſelf; and for this purpoſe conſider,

1. That there is little more in this Objection, than in ſomewhat before, about the Fall of our firſt Parents. And as God was righteous in letting them fall, becauſe they might have ſtood, if they would: So God is righteous in his dealings with men, notwithſtanding he deny them that ſpecial Grace, he gives to others, becauſe they might be ſaved, if they would. When I ſay, Men may be ſaved, if they will, my meaning is, That they are not ſaved, becauſe they will not, and that their wilfullneſs is their condemnation. For if Chriſt, and the Word of Grace revealing Chriſt, and all the Methods of conveying him to poor Souls, and Exhortations, and entreaties to accept of him, be enough, then God is not wanting on his part. For I may now ask all who complain, What is lacking to them more?

Were

Were there not an all-ſufficient Saviour, and ſufficient means of knowing him to Salvation, there might be perhaps ſome occaſion of complaint. But it is farr otherwiſe; and if men will make uſe of theſe means, as they are commanded and intreated to do, I am ſure, they ſhall be ſaved, becauſe the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it. Never did any man dye in his ſins, that was heartily willing to receive Chriſt offer'd to him, and to improve the means of grace allowed him for that end. And may I not then ſay, Men may be ſaved, if they will? They have enough to live upon for ever; and when they play the Unthrifts part, have they any cauſe to blame God, and ſay, He might have done more for them? What ſhould he have done more for them? And what can they anſwer to this queſtion, when their own hearts know, they never lik'd or lov'd Chriſt, or any of his wayes; but wilfully ſcorn'd and rejected all? They lik'd and lov'd a Saviour to deliver them from Death and Hell, after they had taken their full ſwinge in their own wayes, and ſinn'd themſelves out of breath, and could no longer ſerve their luſts. But they would not have Chriſt to reign over them, ſo, as for his ſake, and at his command, to deny themſelves, and all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts. They know, that the Power of Godlineſs was the thing their Souls loathed, and they ſcorn'd it, as ſavouring of nothing but folly and fancy, calling it a Preciſian nicety. And when Chriſt called them to ſuffer for his ſake, (who ſuffered ſo much to ſave their Souls) they would not part with a penny, or loſe an hair of

their head for him. I say then, in one word: Look what hindred *Israel* from seeing the good Land which God had promised them, the same hinders these men from possessing the Heavenly Inheritance, *Heb.* 3. *ult. They could not enter in, because of unbelief.* And yet, as *Moses* tells them, *Deut.* 9. 4. *The Lord had not given them an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear.*

2. How would men have God to save them? Would they be saved in such a way, as if a Block should be lifted from the Earth, and carried up to Heaven? This cannot be, without perverting the whole course of Gods Providence, in governing his reasonable Creatures. For they being made after Gods Image, and acting by an inward Principle of Reason, must be governed in a way and manner suitable to their Nature. God, indeed draws men thitherward; but I never read, he drives them against their wills, or without their privity, *Hos.* 2. 14. *I will allure her,* &c. *Though Conversion be not altogether suspended on the liberty of mans will, but God undertakes for it; yet his way is sweet, and taking with Sinners, who are allured,* as one observes on the place. God by Grace destroyes not Nature, but rectifies and perfects it, whiles (as *Austin* saith) *Omnipotenti facilitate ex nolentibus facit volentes.* He bends and enclines mens hearts, as the Rivers of Water, *Pro.* 21. 1. Now Water, that runs one way, may be turned, and made to run another way: But the Water in its course, alwayes runs according to its natural inclination. Certainly, the worst these men can say of God, is, That he would

would have turned them, and they would not be turned; but they resisted him, in all his strivings with them. And then where lyes the fault? Let any reasonable man judge.

3. This Argument (as I said before) aimes at making God to be not only such a one as our selves, but much lower.

4. God is just, as well as mercifull; and his Justice is as natural, and as essential to him, as his mercy. And if so, Why (I pray) may not God glorifie himself in the one, as well as in the other? If he may not, give some reason, Why. But if God may glorifie his Justice, as well as his Grace, I ask, How God can glorifie it more, beyond all exception, otherwise than thus, *viz.* In destroying those who have had all means sufficient to save them, and willingly rejected all, because they did not like them?

5. I have yet somewhat more to say, in answer to this Objection; and it is so much, as (I hope) may satisfie any, that are soberly minded. They who thus argue, might do well to consider, What that Grace is, which (they say) is not given them. For that Grace, where-ever it comes in its full power and efficacy, sets men at the greatest distance, yea and defiance with all their wonted sinful wayes. Now here may be a great mistake, and these men may seem to desire, they themselves know not what. I believe, they would fain have the Grace of God, to preserve them from suffering Hell-torments, when they are going out of the World, never again to serve the desires of their flesh. But do they desire indeed, to shake hands with, and to bid an ever-

lasting Farewell to their filthy Lusts, so long as they have any ability or opportunity to serve them? For to this the Grace of God calls them, and for this they have had many gracious earnest invitations, which they have sufficiently slighted, and cast off, with as much scorn and contempt as could be. They have never heeded, what they have heard from God himself, speaking and calling to them, by the Commands, Promises, and Threatnings of his written Word, or by the motions of his Spirit, or the checks of their own Consciences, or any Dispensations of his, in any Providences. Now, what do these men mean, in saying, God hath not given them grace, when they slight and set at naught all the saving Methods, which he makes use of, to affect their hearts, and work them over to a thorough-compliance with himself? Why do not they attend their own work, which is, to heed what God commands, promises, and threatens in his Word, and to reform their hearts and lives accordingly? Why do they not lament and bewail the baseness of their own sinfull hearts and natures, humbly acknowledging all their iniquities, and loathing themselves, because they are loathsome in the sight of the Lord? Why do they not confess and forsake their sins, that so they may find mercy, as *Solomon* assures them, *Pro.* 28. 13. Why do they not begg of God strength to resist Sin, and use the means which God hath ordered for that end, *viz.* Fasting and beating down their bodies? Why do not they avoid the occasions of Sin, and keep themselves farr from those places and companies, where

where they are ſure to meet with many temptations? Why do they not frequent the company of thoſe, who will admoniſh them upon all occaſions, and adviſe them about ordering all their wayes? No, They'l do nothing of what is their duty, nor what (I am ſure they have power to do, but only ſin, and ſeek all occaſions to ſin; and then quarrel God, and ſay, He hath not given them grace. This is in effect to ſay, They would have God to ſave them againſt their wills.

Obj. But God can make me willing, if he pleaſe.

Sol. I know God hath a Soveraign power over the hearts of all men, but what then? Would they have God to alter all the ſaving Methods of his grace, and force upon them, what they have refus'd ſo often, with all diſdain and indignation imaginable? They deſire no grace, but what may keep them out of Hell: And ſcorn all grace that's offered them, for reforming their hearts and lives. They are like thoſe froward Patients, that would have their Phyſicians cure them, without any applications made to them; as our Saviour heal'd the lame, and the blind, by a word of his mouth, working wonders, ſuch as had not been heard or known. Not to ſay, that ſuch arguings are abſurd and unreaſonable, Theſe men muſt have low thoughts of God, and his infinite Excellencies, who would have him ſhape the whole courſe and method of his Grace and Providence, according to their ſinfull Intereſts and Humours. To ſay no more, make it our own caſe. When once we have done our endeavours,

us'd all intreaties, yea, and (it may be) added due corrections to our instructions and admonitions, and waited long for a desirable issue, knowing the Party we have to deal with, might, if he had a mind, change his course; we think we can acquit and clear our selves (as indeed we may) before all the World, from having any hand in his undoing himself. And will not the righteous Judge (think we) acquit himself at the last day, in condemning all the ungodly refusers and despisers of his Grace and Mercy? I shall say no more, but as God said to *Job*, *He that reproveth God, let him answer it.* As if he should say, *He that reasons the case* (so the word may well be rendred) *or argues against me, Let him answer, if he can, what I have said, and have yet to say. Thou* Job *hast been very bold and forward to question and quarrel my wayes of Providence, as if they were not such as they should be. But I would have thee know, I am able to guide and govern the World, without any assistance or advice of thine. Hast thou so mean, low, and unworthy thoughts of me, and mine infinite Excellencies, as to imagine, I am to learn of thee, or any other, how to order and dispose the works of my hands? I think, I have said enough to convince thee: But if this do not satisfie thee, I have yet more to say, and beware in time to provoke me no further, for if thou do, thou shalt be sure to know after another manner, that I will not be taught by thee.* So I shall answer no more, but only advise all who thus argue, to read how *Job* answered the Lord, and to give over such malepert daring him, with their disputing his Royal Prerogatives;

Job 40.2.

Job 40. 4, 5.

gatives; which if they considered, as they should, they would count such reasonings but a little beneath blasphemies.

I shall only say further, Though we may awhile plead our weakness, yet God, and our Consciences know, it is only our wickedness, that hinders our Salvation. For my part, I, and others too, can say very much of our weakness, that when we have promised fairly many times, we have performed little or nothing answerable. But we can say much more of our natural wickedness, and the baseness of our deceitfull hearts. Others may speak as they list, I think it best and safest for me, and every one else, to shame our selves before the Lord, by charging home upon our selves the frowardness of a deceitful naughty heart. For this we may know, if we have a mind to it, That we love sin too much, when it is best with us, and God too little, when we love him most; and whom can we blame for this, but our selves? Therefore, God forbid, I should entertain the least thought of charging God foolishly. Let me ever say, God hath not been wanting to me, only I have been wanting to my self. I dare not say, I would be, or do better, if I could; seeing God, and my Conscience know, I could be, and do better, if I would. It is not any fault in God, but my self, that I have no more grace, and that I walk not more uprightly and evenly. For I do willingly yield too often to the suggestions and insinuations of Sin and Satan: And I do not entertain and cherish the sweet motions of Gods Spirit, nor improve the means of growing in

grace, as I might, and ought to do. And, in a word, I am verily perſwaded, if any thing undo me, it is the frowardneſs of an evil heart of unbelief. *In hac fide vivo, in hac moviar.* So let me juſtifie God, both in life and death, whatever becomes of me.

And now I remember, what I before referr'd to this place, concerning an Objection, that is commonly made to this purpoſe.

Obj. That all Exhortations to Faith and Repentance are abſurd and vain, if men are unable to do any thing of themſelves, without the effectual Grace of God over-powering them.

Sol. I ſhall ſay nothing of the Anſwers, that have been made to this Objection by others: But only ſay, There is no ſuch abſurdity, as is imagin'd, becauſe men are exhorted to that which they are unwilling to do. Now what abſurdity is there in this? Or if there be, I am not able to ſee it. Nor can I apprehend it unreaſonable, to perſwade a man to that, which is for his good, when we find him not willing to it. For mans natural inability to any ſpiritual good, I do not queſtion it, if we count of it, as I ſaid before, and as (I think) we ought. But I know full well, that mans weakneſs is his wickedneſs, and his inability is his untowardlineſs; and how can we deal with a froward wilfull man more rationally, than to lay before him the errour, and the evil of his way; and by reaſoning the caſe, perſwade him to leave it? They, whom we deal with, are men, and have reaſon, whereby they are able to judge of what is ſpoken to them; and they can diſcern of good and evil, and ſo chuſe,

as

as they see cause. And when the most is made, that can be, of mans insufficiency, we cannot (as I shew'd formerly) deny him a liberty. And then, where (I pray) lies the absurdity? Deny a natural man that liberty, which (as I said before) must be allowed, I must confess, that to admonish or exhort him, is all one, as to exhort or perswade a beast, or a block. But so long as wicked men do wilfully refuse the wayes of God, and as wilfully goe on in the wayes of their own hearts, I am bold to think, the absurdity will lye at their doors, who say, it is absurd, to perswade a wicked man, to turn from his evil wayes. And how much less absurdity is there, in exhorting those, in whom *the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak?*

And now I shall proceed to prove by other Arguments, That men are wilfull in their own wayes, and willingly neglect the things of their peace, and so perish only upon that account, and no other.

Arg. 2. MY next Argument shall be, from the equity and reason that is and appears in all things, which concern mens Salvation, so as it is easily discernable by mans natural light and understanding. Men (as you have seen before) are apt to quarrel God for his dealings, as if his wayes were not equall: And my design is to prove them alone guilty of their own destruction, and that they shall one day appear so to their own Consciences, and before all the World.

World. And my Argument is this, That all the wayes of God towards men, and all the means he useth for the reclaiming of them, are so rational, even to mens natural understanding, as they can have no cause to quarrel any but themselves. And you may draw the Argument into a narrower compass thus: *If all the counsels and wayes of God, and his methods about mens Salvation, be equitable to the apprehension of sound reason in men themselves, then they can lay the blame of their destruction upon nothing besides their unreasonable, wilfull, and peevish disposition.* This I intend to exemplifie in some Particulars; and add further, That all the Sins of men, for which they are damn'd, are against Natural Reason, as well as against Divine Revelation.

But before I proceed, let me premise the Reason, for which I urge this Argument: And it is this, Because God, to clear himself, doth ever and anon appeal to men; which he doth, because he knows, that the Reason and Consciences of men, when they are put to it, must give evidence on his side. To mention one Text, that was hinted before somewhere, *Esay* 5. 3, 4. *Judge, I pray you* (saith God) *between me, and my Vineyard.* Who are the Parties appeal'd unto in that case? If you look, you shall find none other than the Delinquents themselves, *The men of* Judah, *and the Inhabitants of* Jerusalem. Why so? Even because God knew, that nothing could be pleaded, wherefore he should come short of what he expected; but the case was so clear, as he would leave the Delinquents themselves to be Judges. Surely God would not do thus, if he knew

knew not, that he hath a witness for himself in every mans Conscience; and that his wayes are rational and equal, even when men themselves are Judges.

And now I make this challenge in Gods name and behalf, Shew he that can, what in all the counsels and wayes of God, is dissonant or contrary to right and sound Reason. My meaning is this, There is nothing in any of them, but what by sound natural Reason, a man may apprehend to be equal, righteous, and rational.

And yet in all this, I shall (I hope) keep my self free, and farr enough from over-magnifying of mans Reason; and also from any thought, that the corruption of mans Nature is not in his Understanding, as well, and as much, as in his other faculties. I willingly grant, what I heartily believe, That we are all born blind, and that Ignorance is no small part of mans inbred corruption, and Original Sin. Notwithstanding, I say again, That natural Reason in men, is Light enough to descry, that the wayes of God, and all his transactions with men, are reasonable; that is, None of them are against reason, though some of them be infinitely farr above it. And now I come to particular Instances.

First, I instance in such things, as God hath offer'd us in his Word, to be believed by us.

1. And what one among all those seems more incredible and irrational, than the Resurrection? Yet the Apostle thus reasons, *Act.* 26. 8. *why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that*

that God should raise the dead? The Apostle (you see) makes strange of it, that any of them should strange at it, as a thing incredible. I confess, he had then to deal with the *Jews*, and such as own'd the *Jewish* Religion (at least many of them) and therefore might well ask them the question, because the whole Worship of God, upheld amongst them, was an unreasonable thing, if the Dead should never rise again. But (as I take it) he might as well question the *Gentiles*, after the same manner. Though I know, some may reply, That there is not the same reason, because the *Gentiles* might (as they did) exercise some Religion (such as it was) upon the account of the Souls immortality, whilst they believed no resurrection of the Body. And that * some of them had some Notions of the Souls immortality, without any apprehension of the rising again of the Body, I do not much question; though those Notions, in all of them, were but empty conceits, and as confused as a sick mans dreams. But this I desire to be observ'd, That the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32. argues the Resurrection thus, That if the Dead rise not, the Epicures Opinion may take place: But that Opinion is erroneous (saith the Apostle) and pernicious too, and not to be allowed among Christians, who ought to believe firmly the Resurrection of the Dead. The Apostles Argument is *à Consequente absurdo*, and he saith in effect this, If there be no Resurrection, they might then side with the Epicures, and sing their † Song, Let us take our pleasure while we live, for after death we shall have none. Yea,

* The *Platonists*, though far wide from the mark, as *Beza in arg. Psal.* 90. observes.

† *Edè, bibàs, ludas, post mortem nulla voluptas.*

observe

observe also, *v.* 32. *If after the manner of men*, that is, as farr as men could do, or with regard only to this present life, which all men live, *I have fought with beasts at* Ephesus, *what advantageth it me, if the Dead rise not?* Doth not the Apostle lay the ground-work and foundation of *all Religion, upon the Resurrection? It is as much as to say, What need I suffer, and (by the same reason) what need I do any thing about Religion, if there be no Resurrection? His whole Argument is grounded upon Reason, and his Conclusion is the absurdity of Religion, if there be no Resurrection. And that it is so, appears from his reasoning, *v.* 36. *Thou fool, that which thou sowest, is not quickned, except it dye.* Where *Calvin* observes, *That the Apostle might have answer'd their Question, [How are the Dead raised, &c.] by shewing, how easie it is to God Almighty, though it seem incomprehensible to us, and that we are not to judge of such things by our own sense, but according to his infinite power.* But the Apostle answereth otherwise, by shewing, That the Resurrection is so farr from contradicting the course of Nature, as we have continually a clear proof and instance of it, in the fruits of the earth, which arise and grow out of the seeds that are sown, and rot in the ground. Now seeing all Generation is from Corruption, in the seed sown, we have therein an image and resemblance of the Resurrection. And the effect of all the Apostles discourse is this, That there is as much reason for the bodies rising again, as there is for the growing again of the grain we sow in the earth. And hence he rebukes them thus, *Thou*

Humanæ vitæ respectu, ita ut nobis constet præmium in hoc mundo. Calv.

*Not this, or that, but all.

Thou fool, confuting Atheists from the course of Nature, as men that have not common sense. As if he should say, How unreasonable are you, to question the Resurrection, when the like thing is before you every day, and you see with your eyes ordinarily, what is as strange as that? From the whole (to say no more) it is clear, That there is a ground in reason, for every man to believe the Resurrection; though I deny not, that it is further clear'd, and we are most confirm'd in the belief of it, by the written Word; yea, and that our blind Reason would never have discover'd it, without Divine Revelation.

2. The Incarnation of the Son of God, is a thing (I confess) above all mans Reason, and yet not therefore against Reason.

3. The Apostle stands admiring, *O the depth, &c.* Ro. 11. 33 *How unsearchable are his judgements, and his wayes past finding out!* And yet whoever believes these, as they are by the Spirit revealed in the Word, doth nothing but what is most rational. For if there be one Almighty, Infinite, Eternal God, (as *Socinians*, I hope, grant) then it is most absurd to think, that his judgements, wayes, works, and counsels are such, as can be measured by the standard of mans reason. No reason will perswade a man to measure what is Infinite, by that which is finite, more than to think of taking up the Ocean in a Nut-shell. And if it should be thought, that the *Socinians* have the advantage at Reason against us (if it were not for Scripture) in the highest Mysteries of Divinity, I thing otherwise, because it is against all reason, to allow of nothing in the counsels and

wayes

wayes of God, that is not commensurable with mans understanding. For that is all one, as to make him such a one as our selves; whereas our owning him as God, is an acknowledgement of his Beeing and Excellencies infinite beyond all our Reason.

4. Reason is not able to apprehend the Mystery of the Trinity: And yet it is but reasonable for us to believe, what Scripture hath reveal'd about it, because it is agreeable to Reason, that God must be such an Essence and Existence, as no Creature is able to comprehend. For God were not God indeed, nor like himself, if his Subsistence were such as we could apprehend. Even Reason will enforce us to grant, That God can be comprehended by none but himself. For how can a man apprehend God aright, without apprehending him infinite? That which is finite, even in the judgement of Reason, cannot be God. And therefore the Heathens were most absurd in their Polytheism, or multiplicity of Gods, because there can be but one infinite, and so but one God. Now the true God being indeed such, it is unreasonable in us to think, by searching, to find him out in his Essence, Subsistence, or Attributes. And for this purpose, let it be considered, what the Apostle saith concerning mans Reason, when it is us'd about the things of God, 1 *Cor.* 2. How should a beast understand the things of a man, and how much less can a man understand the things of God? I think I may rationally say, He must be a God, that knows perfectly what God is. True, we may understand what he hath revealed for our

learning;

learning; but our understanding is according to his revealing it, only by our Faith, which sees that which Reason cannot discern; and yet our Faith is not unreasonable: For we can give a reason of our believing such things, as God hath revealed, *viz.* Infallible, Divine Authority, though we cannot give a reason of some things believed by us. And there is nothing more reasonable, than to believe, whatever God saith, to be true; though we can give no reason more, than that God saith it. For a God that can lye, Reason it self will say, is not, cannot be God, but an Idol, or a Devil. And hence I inferr, That Reason teacheth us to believe the highest Mysteries revealed in Scripture, as the Trinity, the Incarnation, *&c.* and they that think otherwise, therein shew themselves unreasonable. And for the Counsels of God, in disposing of his Creatures according to his pleasure, what reasonable man can question them? Or if any man do it, may it not justly and rationally be said to him, as *Elihu* spake unto *Job*? *Behold, in this, thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? For he giveth no account of his matters.* Job 33. 12, 13. And if so, it is indeed most unreasonable in any man to expect it. Certainly, if any, God may challenge this Prerogative, *viz.* To give no account of his wayes and counsels. And for men to pry into them, further than he hath reveal'd; and demand a reason of his will and pleasure, when he is pleas'd to give none, is indeed to do against Reason. For there is nothing more reasonable than this, That God may do what he

pleaseth,

pleaſeth, and not to be queſtion'd by any for it, ſeeing all things elſe are the works of his hands. And this was the Apoſtles mind, when he ſaid, *Ro.* 9. 20, 21. *Nay but O man, who art thou, that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed, ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the clay,* &c. And doth not the Prophet (whom the Apoſtle cites, or alludes to in that place) ſay as much, and more? *Eſay* 45. 9. *Woe to him that ſtriveth with his Maker,* &c. *i. e.* quarrels God about his Providences, as if he meant to controll him.

To clear and confirm my Argument yet further. Doth not the Apoſtle argue from Reaſon, upon all occaſions, even about the things of God, ſpecially when he had to do with Heathens? *Act.* 14. 15. ſaith he to thoſe who would have ſacrificed to to him, *We preach unto you, to turn from theſe vanities, unto the living God, which made Heaven and Earth,* &c. As if he ſhould have ſaid, If you will ſerve a God, ſerve him that is God indeed, and who is the living and true God, your own reaſon will ſhew you: It is he that made Heaven and Earth, &c. You are unreaſonable in ſacrificing to any other, becauſe no other can be God. And *v.* 17. he goes on to ſhew, That they, and their fore-Fathers, had light enough from Gods Providential Diſpenſations, to teach them, that *Jupiter, Mercurius,* and ſuch Vanities, or Idols, could not be the true and living God, ſo as they were inexcuſable. And ſo he argueth, *Act.* 17. That *we ought not to think the God-head like unto Gold or Silver,* &c. ſeeing it is againſt all reaſon, as he proves from

v. 24, to *v.* 29. So likewise *Ro.* 1. he proveth the *Gentiles* Idolatry, in making Images and Representations of God, to be against the light of Nature, and natural Reason, which was able to see so much of his eternal Power and Godhead, in the things that are made, as they might easily conclude, that God was not to be represented by any similitude of earthly things, because they cannot be like him, *Act.* 17. 29.

I shall yet in other instances labour to evidence, That there is nothing in true Religion, but what is reasonable.

For Moral Duties towards men, our Saviour layeth down an undoubted Principle of Reason, *Mat.* 7. 12. and addeth, *That this is the Law, and the Prophets*, *i. e.* This is the summ and substance of all they have taught, concerning the duty of man to man, the most equal Law, to do, as we would be done unto. All the Commandments against Murder, Adultery, Theft, *&c.* are Principles of common Reason, and the Law of Nature. For Children to obey their Parents, is reasonable, and so the Apostle presseth it, *Eph.* 6. 1. because it is *just*, or *right*. How can Children be thankful, but in being dutiful to their Parents? And for Servants to obey their Masters, it is equal, for they maintain and find them necessaries for their lives. And to obey Principalities and Powers, is but reason, because by them the people are kept in peace; and there would be otherwise no safety or society amongst men. Whatever some may fancy or feign, True Religion, in the highest and strictest practice of it, is no teacher of mis-rule; but teacheth obedience

dience for conſcience ſake, and ſheweth the right way of yielding it according to Gods Commandment. And 'tis not reaſonable to think, it teacheth obedience in ſome only, and not in all Relations. Yea, it is impoſſible to ſerve God, as we ought, and not to ſerve one another in love.

Nay, the moſt Spiritual Duties of denying our ſelves, and crucifying our luſts, are moſt reaſonable. To part with our lives, and all we have, for Chriſts ſake, is moſt equal, ſeeing he dyed for us. And if I were to diſpute for the Chriſtian Religion, againſt an Infidel, I would dare him to ſhew any one thing in Scripture, that is contrary to ſound Reaſon; or any Article of the Chriſtian Faith, that is not rational, as I have ſhewed before in ſome of them.

And now I lay down theſe three Concluſions, which I avouch rational, and by Reaſon demonſtrable, *viz.*

1. That there is more Reaſon in any Religion, than in no Religion at all.

2. That there is more Reaſon in the true Chriſtian Religion, than there is in any other.

3. That there is more Reaſon in the life and practice of true Religion, and the power of Godlineſs, than in the empty form, and out-ſide profeſſion of it.

Theſe I ſhould further dilate upon, but that all of them are moſt excellently, and undeniably, of late, diſcourſed at large by others. Yet I ſhall not content my ſelf with the bare naming of them.

1*st*. For the First, I say, That the wayes wherein Atheists have gone about to undermine Scripture-Authority, and so overthrow all Religion, are contrary to sound Reason. For is it not more rational in us, to believe, That one Eternal, Infinite Beeing, made this whole frame of Heaven and Earth, than to fancy an empty, infinite Space, and an infinite number of Atomes coursing up and down in it, and by a fortuitous concourse (as it were, by hap-hazard, no sober man can imagine how) to fall into order, and so produce this frame of the World, as now we see it? I shall not dispute in the case, but only appeal to the judgement of any man that's sober, and in his senses, which of those two is most credible to the apprehension of Reason. And is not our Faith of one eternal God, as rational, as others conceit of an eternal Pre-existent matter? Not to say, How precarious the Principles of others, that are against us, are, I add, How absurd and unreasonable they are to the apprehension of any sober intelligent man, and farr more incredible and improbable, than what we believe of the Worlds Creation, according to the written Word. Let those who count so light of Scripture-Doctrine, and set so highly by some aiery Speculations and Notions (whether of old, or of late cryed-up) shew us somewhat more rational, than what is Scriptural. And whether the Philosophy of *Moses*, &c. be not as agreeable to any sober mans reason, as any opposition of Science, which by some is so much admired. It is not my design, to engage with such Notionists, who had best deal first with others, that have

have ſaid enough. I think it enough to declare, that they have done little to ſatisfie the ſober reaſon of intelligent men. For (I ſay again) Let all be weighed, not in the ballance of the Sanctuary (which they ſufficiently ſlight) but by the ſtandard of true Reaſon, and if they be not found too light, I grant, they have ſaid ſomewhat to their purpoſe. There is a World fram'd and conſtituted, as we ſee; and a diſpute there hath been, and (I think) ſtill is with ſome, How it came to be ſo fram'd and conſtituted? Now I only plead, That the account, which *Moſes* hath given of the Worlds beginning, is much more credible to meer Reaſon, than any other. And thereupon ask, Why ſhould it ſeem incredible, that one who had his beeing from none, but of himſelf, ſhould make all things out of nothing? They, whoſe intereſt it would be, to have no God, are willing to perſwade themſelves, and others too, that there is none. And theſe ſay, That ſome men have, for their own turns, made others believe, there is a God, and ſo the World is troubled about ſomething, which is indeed nothing. We who believe the beeing of one God, appeal not to Scripture (of which theſe men count nothing) but ask them, How this frame, and all its furniture, came to be firſt ſet up? That this World made it ſelf, is an abſurdity, beyond all reaſon, and common ſenſe. Hence ſome have deviſed wayes of faſhioning the World, ſuch as I hinted ſome before, that they may ſtand in no fear of any God or Devil, nor live in expectation of any Hell or Heaven hereafter. But herein they goe againſt all Reaſon, which is the

only Judge, to whose sentence they are content to stand. That the true notion of a Deity is most consonant to Reason, and the light of Nature, is excellently proved by the Learned *Stillingfleet*. And they that deny, there is a God, do assert other things (as he saith) on farr less evidence of reason; and must by their own principles, deny some things, which are apparently true. And he instances in these, *viz.* That the World was as it is, from all Eternity, or else it was first made by a fortuitous concourse of Atomes, both which Hypotheses being urged with the same, or greater difficulties, are more weakly proved, than the existence of a Deity. And whoever shall be pleas'd to enquire, will find it so. Therefore we contend for Religion against Atheists, upon grounds of Reason. And I say again, That none of them all have produced any thing so rational, as that which is Scriptural.

Orig. Sac. lib. 3. c. 1.

Lastly. And for the truth and reason of the Christian Religion, the same learned Author hath said enough in the learned discourse aforesaid. All that I shall say, is this, That if any man please to examine all the several religious perswasions, that are, or have been in the World, beside that which Scripture hath reveal'd and warranted, and weigh them in the ballance of sound Reason, he need not be much puzzled about the choice of his Religion: For it will soon appear, even to Reason, That all Religions, beside the truly Christian, are unreasonable.

If any ſtrange at this, becauſe many in all ages, who had good natural Reaſon, have rejected the Chriſtian Religion. I anſwer,

1. That they had Reaſon, but made not a due and right improvement of it, and therefore ſhewed themſelves unreaſonable, as the Apoſtle proves it againſt them, *Ro.* 1. 19, 20, *&c.* And that God did therefore give them up to vile affections, as a puniſhment of their unreaſonable Idolatries.

2. We having Scripture-light, which they had not, have our Reaſon more rectified and enlightned, than they had, or could have. And without the light of Divine Revelation, we, in all probability, might have been as vain in our imaginations, as they. But then, I ſay, both we and they had been unreaſonable. And God himſelf uſeth no other Argument againſt the *Gentiles* Idolatries, than the abſurdity and unreaſonableneſs of them, *Eſay* 44. *They that make a graven Image,* &c. *they are their own witneſſes. They ſee not, nor know, that they may be aſhamed.* And after a large account of their doings about their Images and Idols, *v.* 18, 19. he ſaith, *They have not known, nor underſtood.* And again, *None conſidereth in his heart, nor is there knowledge or underſtanding,* &c. As if he ſhould ſay, *Theſe Makers of Idols, that know whereof they are made, and how handled in the making, are the beſt witneſſes, that can be brought againſt them: For if they were not ſadly beſotted, and void of common ſenſe, they would never imagine, the ſtock of a Tree could be made a God.* The main thing to be obſerv'd for my purpoſe, is this, That

Eſay 44. 10. Who hath formed a God, *&c.*? *i.e.* Who but a mad man, *&c.* *Garâk. Annotat. in Loc.*

That they had light enough by their own reason, to discover the vanity of making Idols. For this they are charged with, That they did not debate the matter with themselves, nor reason the case as they might; which if they had done, they could never have been so bruitish and senseless, as they shewed themselves to be, in saying to the work of their own hands, *Ye are our Gods.*

And now, Let none desire me to instance in any other, having spoken of Idolaters, because all the World of Mankind, that worship not the true and only God, in the alone Mediator, and no other, are Idolaters. This is plain and clear, and needs no proof; except any will say, The *Turks* are no Idolaters, because they like no Images. But however, they are affected to Images; they must be ranked amongst Idolaters, that honour a Varlet (such as *Mahomet* was) more than the Lord Jesus Christ. They have not the Son, *and therefore have not the Father*, 1 *Joan.* 2. 23. And then, what can they be other, than Idolaters? The same is to be thought of the *Jews*, who worship the true God, but not in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To instance in the particular absurdities of all other Religions, would be endless, and (for ought I know) to no great purpose. It may suffice to hint in general, what any man may improve, (when ever he pleases, in his own thoughts) by running over in his mind, the wayes and doings of all that serve not one God only in the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though we had our Religion by Revelation, and that be enough to confirm our Faith; yet we have this to boot,

for

for our further confirmation in it, That it hath more of Reaſon in it, than any other.

Hence we inferr, That an Atheiſt is the verieſt fool of all, that for the pleaſures of this World, which he may not enjoy one hour, cannot (by his own confeſſion) enjoy one hundred of years, dares run the hazard of loſing himſelf for ever. As long as it is diſputable with him, Whether there be a God, or no, his wiſeſt and ſafeſt way were, to chuſe the ſtrongeſt ſide: For if it prove at laſt, that there is no God, he gains a very little, as much as comes to nothing, no more than a beaſt, that hath as much as he, and more too. But if there be a God (ſuch as we believe) in what a caſe will he be, at the great day of account? And to think, there is a God, that cares not what becomes of the World, and will never judge the World, is all one, as to ſay, there is no God. Now a man had need of infallible and undeniable Principles, to prove, there is no God, who dares to live in this World, as if there were none; becauſe the adventure is of infinite concernment and conſequence.

And for the choice of a mans Religion, I ſay again, He need do no more than uſe his Reaſon, That will give him light enough to chuſe the beſt. I do not ſay, nor mean, That *Reaſon* alone could ever have diſcover'd the only way of Salvation, or the right way of worſhipping God, ſo as to pleaſe him in it. But when God hath in his Word diſcover'd to us his good will, in all that concerns his glory, and our everlaſting good, we dare appeal to *Reaſon*, for the truth and goodneſs of our *Religion*; and challenge all the

World,

World, to shew us any other, that is half so rational.

3dly. I should be much more large in proving my third Position, about the power and practice of true Religion, if another hand had not of late so happily prevented me; yet somewhat I have to say of this also.

Vindicia Pietatis, by *R. A.*

Vix compos mentis.

'Tis no strange, or new thing, to see all godliness, and circumspect walking, cryed down, under an odious imputation of folly and fancy. 'Twas said of Christ, *He is beside himself*, *Marc.* 3. 21. or one transported with a Fanatique Extasie. And of the blessed Apostle, *That too much learning had made him madd*, *Act.* 26. 24. His plain manner and method of preaching Christ crucified, was by the worldly-wise counted and call'd, *the foolishness of preaching*, though it were indeed, *the wisdome and power of God to Salvation*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23. Therefore we have the less need to be troubled at the language of many in our times, seeing they speak but what they have learn'd from their Fore-fathers. For certain, we pretend to no Enthusiasms, beyond all sense and reason, but appeal to Christ, and his written Word, to be tryed by them in all things, for which we are counted Fanatiques.

For the aspersion of Folly, upon all that desire to remember God in his wayes, and to walk humbly with him, we may safely appeal to the same Judges, now before spoken of, because the wisdome of God in Scripture give the name of [FOOL] to none but to such as are ungodly; Witness *Davids* Psalmes, and *Solomons* Proverbs,

verbs, &c. But I ſhall argue a little further thus: If the Principles of our *Religion* be ſuch, as we are bound to contend for it againſt all Adverſaries, then the practice which agrees beſt with, and comes neareſt to thoſe Principles, deſerves not the imputation of Folly, nor can be ſo accounted of by any, but unreaſonable men. Hence I am bold to ask, Who are the verieſt fools? They that know the Laws of Chriſt, and labour to walk accordingly: Or they that pretend to know them, but in all their works deny them? The Principles of true Chriſtian *Religion* are theſe, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *That we deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly*, &c. *That for every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account*, Mat. 12. 36. *That God ſhall bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs*, and bring them to judgement, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *Eccleſ.* 12. 14. Now compare mens practices with theſe Principles, and it may be eaſily ſeen, who are the verieſt fools. Many there are, that glory much in their being Proteſtants, and will ſometimes pity Papiſts, for being miſ-led, as to their religious perſwaſions. But I am bold to think, That ſome Proteſtants have as much need to pity themſelves, for their ungodly practices. For if any under Heaven, be in the way to Hell, ſome of theſe Proteſtants are. If you deſire to know, which of them? I anſwer, All thoſe, who are common ordinary Drunkards, Swearers, Fornicators, and Adulterers, with all of the ſame ſtamp; and that (to fill up the meaſure of their ſins the faſter) do ſhew the greateſt hatred and ſcorn, that can be, of all that profeſs

and practice godliness. This I have against these Protestants (or rather for them, if they will make a right use of it) That a Papist, leading an honest, temperate, and sober life, can give a more rational account of his Religion, than any of them, or any others like them. But I say further, Doth not Reason teach every man, to be true to his own Principles; and that we should not profess one thing, and practice another quite contrary? Nay, do not lewd and vicious persons cry out against others, that they are not, what they seem to be? These (say they) are your great Professors, and they can do so and so. Is this according to their profession? And I say, If great Professors, be not also precise and strict practisers, they are to be blamed, yea, and without Repentance, shall be damn'd.

But I say withall, That whoever proclaims himself a Protestant, is a great Professor in so doing. For the true Protestant Religion teaches and obliges to all possible circumspection, and holy conversation, and godliness. The Gospel is call'd, *The Doctrine that is according to Godliness*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. As for any, that are accounted more than ordinary Professors, I heartily wish, that none of them might deserve the charge, that's commonly made against them; and to them I say, If they be indeed faulty, they shall dearly rue it: I mean, they must reform their lives, or their profession will stand them in no stead one day, when all shall be judged according to their works. And for many of them, I am confident, and well assured, That such a charge is no better than a calumny, and reproaching

ing of Christ in his members. For there are many of them (I hope) *Nathaniels*, and true *Israelites*, in whom there is no guile.

However it be, this agreed upon, on all hands, That 'tis unreasonable, to profess one thing, and practice another. And hence I say, That all Protestants, so call'd, who are vicious in their lives, do therein shew themselves unreasonable, as well as ungodly men. For many of them, I believe, (and not without reason) that they know not well themselves, what they profess. Sure many of them (the more pity) are profoundly ignorant of the very first Principles of the Protestant-Religion? and can give no rational or tolerable account, why they are *Protestants*, and not *Papists*, or *Pagans*. But whatever they know of their Religion, I am sure, many of them little consider of any conversation suitable to it. And therefore I shall mind them of what they do profess, and it is this, That they profess the strictest and preciselt way of serving God, and walking with God, that ever was made known to the Children of Men. They profess to believe the Gospel of Christ, and that Gods written Word is the only Rule of Faith and Manners. Now the Gospel, and the Word of Grace, do certainly prescribe the most exact and accurate way of Life, that can be. And I need not be long in proving this to any professed *Protestants*. But if any make question of it, let them enquire, what they engaged for, and to, when they were baptized. For then they must acknowledge themselves Professors of a very strict Religion, unless they will renounce their Baptism.

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The Fanatiques are not the only great Professors; but every one, that owns himself for a Protestant, must either disown his Baptism, and blaspheme Christ, and the Gospel openly; or else he must look on himself as a great Professor of Godliness. For as Christ commanded, so Baptism obligeth to the most severe and preciseſt way of Godliness. And if he live in the constant practice and allowance of all uncleanness, he is an unreasonable, as well as a wicked man. The Apostle joyns both those together, *2 Thes.* 3. 2. And if those wicked ones there meant (perhaps professed Infidels) were unreasonable, much more they that profess the Faith, and are in their conversation worse than Infidels. Those indeed contradicted their own Principles: But professed *Christians* much more, and are therefore most unreasonable and wicked men. For Grace and Nature, Law and Gospel, cry out against them, and will one day come in, as witnesses for their conviction, because they walk'd contrary to them all. Let them count of themselves as they please for a while, Christ, when he comes to judge, will number them with those, *Who cry, Lord, Lord, and do not the will of his Father which is in Heaven; and therefore they must depart, and be gone, because they are the workers of iniquity.* And what do these mean by their going to Church, and joyning in publick Prayers, and hearing of Sermons, and receiving the Sacraments? Sure in these they profess, and pretend to somewhat. They will not (I hope) say, They profess Adultery, and Swearing, and Drunkenness, *&c.* And yet all the World knows,

Mat. 7. 21, 22, 23.

many

many of them live in the constant practice of such, or the like abominable vices.

1. These I wish first to consider what they do, when they mock and scoff at others, for their preciseness. For if they deals, as becomes rational men, they would, as often as they see any more strict and precise, presently say, These men do honestly, and rationally too, for they practice, as they profess; whereas we profess as much as they, but do nothing alike.

2. I wish them also to consider, That when they cry out against others, as Hypocrites and Dissemblers, in so doing, they condemn themselves. For they profess the Religion that Christ taught, and they will not say (I hope) that Christ taught men to be Swearers, and Drunkards, &c. Now they must say thus, and so be most horrid Blasphemers; or confess themselves to be Dissemblers, for practising quite contrary to what they profess. And that they do so, is beyond all contradiction; and when they can prove others to be the same, we will say as much of them. But till then, we have reason to look on these, as unreasonably wicked, so unreasonably uncharitable towards others, to say no worse of them.

I might here enlarge my self, by shewing the unreasonableness of most Sins, that are of ordinary and daily practice, with many call'd *Protestant*. But somewhat tending this way, was hinted before, in shewing the Reason that is in all the Commandments. Yet I shall add, That whereas they have cryed out against their Ministers, for being so harsh and severe, they forget

what their own Consciences have told them oftner, and more sharply, than ever any Minister did, or could. But of this I may say more elsewhere. For present, I urge them with the unreasonableness of their constant daily practices, and ask them, Is not prophane Swearing an unreasonable Sin, when there is not in it (as in some other fleshly wickedness) any the least seeming sensual profit or pleasure? A man may be a very Epicure (as one saith) and yet hate Swearing. What doth a Drunkard make himself to be, more than a two legg'd Beast? Nay, is there any Beast almost, that will drink to drunkenness, except it be a Swine? I need not instance in more particulars. But to shut up this, All or most of the Ten Commandments, have been, and still are, justly accounted to be of moral and natural equity. And the Fourth, though yielded to be but Positive-moral, hath so much Reason in it, That since God hath allowed us six dayes, we may well allow him the seventh. And they that make no conscience of this, or many other Commandments, as appears by their practices, are unreasonable men, which was the thing to be proved.

Arg. 3. ANother Reason, to prove ungodly men guilty of their own destruction, and so altogether inexcusable before the Lord, may be drawn from the inward secret workings of their own Consciences. For when they pretend, That they want Light, to see the good,

good, and the right way, their Consciences will rise up, and be as so many swift witnesses against them. How many times have they been rounded in the ear, and told by a voice within them, that their way was not good before the Lord? How often hath Conscience stood, as the Angel did in *Balaams* way, with a drawn sword in his hand, to turn them back again? What dumps and fits of melancholly (as some call them) have they had, when those everlasting burnings have flash'd in their faces, to fright them out of their ungodly wayes? And will they yet say, They had not Light enough, to see the good and the right way, when they notwithstanding have posted on still, and press'd forward against all opposition and contradiction of Consciences? For certain, many wicked ones have had much of their Hell upon Earth, so much, as might have serv'd (if they had been wise enough) to mind them of Heavens way. It may be, that some of them have their Heaven here, though a very short, uncertain, and inconsiderable felicity. But there are few of them, that meet not with rubbs enough, to stop them in their career Hell-ward, if they would but heed them. They are not so merry, as the World takes them to be; But even in the midst of laughter, the heart is sorrowful, to think what will be the end of their madd mirth.

I need not say more to these, than only advise them to abide at home, and hear what their Consciences tell them. But this perhaps is labour in vain, when they are resolv'd beforehand, to give Conscience as good as it brings.

However, I cannot forbear to ſtick this, as an Arrow in their ſides, and let them pluck it out again, if they can: That they can with no face, or colour of truth, ſay, They have not Light, to ſee the good, and the right way. For God hath put a Light into their hands, and they have put it out on purpoſe, that they may goe on in darkneſs. And this God himſelf charges them with, *Pſa.* 14. 4. *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge*, &c? The Interrogative hath in it a more vehement deniall. It is not of ignorance, or infirmity, they do thus wickedly, but wittingly, and willingly, againſt all conviction of Conſcience. And therefore there will be need of no other witneſſes againſt theſe men one day, than what they themſelves ſhall bring forth, and God will, in his judging of them, appeal to their own Conſciences, that will then be ready to juſtifie him before all the World, that he gave them a Light to ſee plainly the perverſeneſs of their own way; but they caſt it away, or put it out, and would not walk by it. I need ſay no more, but only deſire men to conſider, how they will anſwer their own Conſciences, in the great day of account, when they have reſiſted ſo long, and ſo often gone againſt, what they have known by the Light that is within them. If they can deal with Conſcience hereafter, as they do at preſent, they may do themſelves a pleaſure: But I much doubt it.

Annon ſibi ſunt Conſcii?

Arg. 4. I Shall add another Reason, to prove, That men have had Light enough shining round about them, and would not endure it. And this is their impatiency, and peevishness of Spirit, when they have been again and again admonished of their faults, by such as have known them, and have had opportunities of doing them such a good Office.

And here I may, upon this occasion, take up a complaint, and say, Who, or where is he, that will bear a seasonable reproof, when it is given him? Some such (I hope) there are; but truly it is not easie to light on them. A man had need run to and fro to seek them, and if any should ask me, Where such dwell? I cannot easily give an answer, such as I would.

'Tis said of *Cranmer*, *That to do him a forward turn, was the way to make him a Friend for ever.* If it were so indeed, I cannot enough admire the most excellent frame of his Spirit, that could turn Poyson into Medicine, and take occasion to love, even from that which only tends to hatred and strife. Surely the contrary is to be seen in too many. Do them the best office of love, that can be done, you make them your Enemies for ever, they will never care for you more.

And this is an infallible Demonstration, of what I am now discoursing. How can men say, they want Light, when they run from it, and will not suffer it to come near them. *The Law is a light, and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life.* Prov. 6. 23. So saith the Wiseman, by the illumine of God in him. And I may say

of Christian brotherly admonition, that it is a a most singular help to preserve and improve the life and practice of godliness. It is, as it were, the snuffing of the lights, to make them burn more clearly. I need not shew how much the Scripture commends it: He that turns over the Bible, cannot be ignorant of it.

It is, in one word, a Duty, that lies on all men; but on professed Christians more especially; to give it wisely, as there is occasion, and take it kindly, when it is given.

Now for men to storm and rage, upon all occasions, against all reproof, and shew themselves such, as others dare not come near them, is a sufficient Argument of Conviction, and cannot be answer'd. For with what face can a man plead, that he is well dispos'd, and willing to do what's right, when, be he never so much out of his way, he scorns to be told of it? Yet many such there are, who have shut up their Consciences under hatches; and for others, they dare not tell them of their faults, lest they be made to feel their fingers. And I wish this were the fault of Ruffians and Roysters only: But many more sober to look upon, and perhaps inoffensive otherwise, as to other men, will rage like madd, if you come near them, with the least touch of a reproof, though never so gentle and seasonable. Yea, a man had need beware of them, *Lest they make him an Offender for a word, and lay a snare for him in the Gate.* Nor I, nor others need to marvel at the great miscarriages of so many, if we but duly consider, what I am now speaking of. There must needs be an abounding

Esay 29. 21.

bounding of all ungodliness, when it overflows all the banks, and no man dares put a stop to it, by saying to another, Why do you thus? And this, to say no more, is enough to shew, That men might, if they would, know more of God, and his will, but that they despise admonition, and will not abide reproof. They cannot pretend want of Light, who put it away, whensoever it is offer'd to them; and would, if they could, put it quite out, that they may goe on in darkness.

Arg. 5. THere is yet more Light to shew men their way, if they would but heed it, and not wilfully shut their eyes against it. Every sincere and sound Believer is a Light, Philip. 2. shining in the midst of a crooked Nation. And 15. herein ungodly men condemn themselves, that they cannot abide the light of other mens profession and practice, holding forth the word of life. They are ever quarrelling those, that are more eminent in profession, for their miscarriages in practice, whether truly or falsely charg'd upon them. For what is this more, or better, than the enmity that is in their hearts against God, and his wayes? And let it not offend any, that I say so, till they have heard what I have yet to say.

That many eminent Professors have faulted and fallen, and that most foully, cannot be denied, because the Scriptures have furnish'd us with so many sad Instances in this kind. And

that the moſt of Gods faithful Servants have been ſam'd, or defam'd rather, as guilty of the ſame, or the like, is clear from Scripture, and from experience in all ages. But whether the faults of Profeſſors be reall, or only feigned, ſtill (I ſay again) the Scandall that is taken by ſo many, is an Argument of the old hatred; and ſhews an inbred deſire, to have the wayes of God ſlurr'd, that they may have an excuſe for ſlighting them. And if it be ſo (as I hope to make it appear) we have another Evidence, that men have Light enough, but have no mind to walk by it. For why ſhould any man cry out (as many do) againſt Profeſſors, and profeſſion of Religion, if there were not ſomewhat more, than what they are willing to have known by themſelves? But I ſhall argue it a little further thus.

First, I'le ſuppoſe the Scandall to be indeed reall: What then? Is that a ground ſufficient to ſay, I will never goe in the way, that ſuch pretended to? A man indeed may, and ought to ſay, I will never do, as ſuch have done, wherein they have done amiſs. And this both Religion and Reaſon will teach us. But therefore to ſlight, and ſet at naught all Profeſſion, and the very face and ſhew of Religion (to ſay no more) is moſt unreaſonable; and a ſufficient evidence of that enmity, which is by Nature in the hearts of all men againſt God, and his wayes. For what is Gods way the worſe, becauſe ſuch and ſuch have turn'd aſide from it? Nay, is it better than blaſphemy, to cry out with open mouth, againſt that which is of God, becauſe of

that

that which is vile and baſe in men? *David* committed Adultery, and Murder too, and therein occaſion'd the enemies of God to blaſpheme, which was the great aggravation of his ſin and puniſhment. But obſerve, It was blaſphemy in the enemies of God; and they were Gods enemies, that took occaſion to blaſpheme. For thoſe enemies might have known, and ſhould have taken notice, that *David*'s God had forbidden thoſe horrid ſins, by his righteous Laws, written in the hearts of all men; and therefore had no cauſe to ſpeak or think the worſe of him, for his Servants offences. Was Chriſt the worſe, or the leſs to be eſteem'd, becauſe *Peter* denied and forſwore him? What reaſon then is there, in making the wayes of God to ſuffer for the faults of thoſe that pretend to them? *The wayes of the Lord are right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them; but the tranſgreſſours ſhall fall therein, Hoſ.* 14. 9. The beſt Maſter may have a baſe Servant, and the beſt Prince may have a Traytor amongſt his Subjects; muſt the good Prince or Maſter bear the fault of the bad Subject or Servant? Or is ſubjection and ſervice to be denied by others, becauſe ſome Servants and Subjects are not ſo good as they ſhould be? And in ſuch caſes, every man will ſay, There is no cauſe. And what reaſon, I pray, is there in this caſe, more than in thoſe? *Theſe be the people of Jehovah*, ſaid the enemies of both, *Ezech.* 36. 20. Theſe be your great Profeſſors, ſay many: But who? None but enemies to God and godlineſs. Oh! ſay they, See what ſuch an one hath done. We will grant it, and 'tis but too true,

He hath done, what he ought not to have done. But why is this cast, as dirt, in the face of all Professors, and profession of Religion? The God whom they serve, alloweth them not in their so doing: He hath forbidden them to do so, and commanded them the quite contrary. And all the wayes of his Commandments are holy, just, and good. To profess the true Religion is good, and according to the mind of God, though it be not all that's good: For to a good profession, must be added a good conversation, and the Power of Godliness must goe along with the Form of it. If a man profess, and practice not accordingly, thou hast no cause to slight his profession, but rather to do what he did not, *viz.* Adorn thy profession with a suitable conversation.

In this I plead not for empty, outside Professors, that dishonour, as much as may be, the profession of Religion. I shall rather advise them to one of these two, *viz.* To let their conversation hold pace with their profession, that the Name of God be not blasphemed; or else to lay aside their profession. For such loose Professors of Religion exceedingly wrong themselves, and others, and God most of all, as might be easily shewn in many Particulars. But I shall only say what is enough, That they do, as if they design'd to make all the World scorn and hate God, and his wayes. Men should not indeed slight Gods wayes, for the looseness of those that pretend to walk in them, as was said before. But too many are so minded, as they will blaspheme, and these Professors give them occasion of so doing.

And

And just so in a manner do all they, who from their *Pulpits* will declame against the *Vices* of others, when all their Auditors know them to live in some or other of those same Vices, and repent not. Such preaching of such *Preachers*, is a fair Argument, to encourage the looser sort in slighting all preaching, and all profession of Religion. For what will they say, other than this? *If there be such danger in such wayes, as we are told; and so much necessity of taking up a more precise course, why doth not our Minister, and others like him, practice their own Doctrine? Whatever they say, when they are in the Church, we see well enough, what they do elsewhere, and at other times. Why may not we run the adventure, as well as they.* And indeed, it is the ready way to perswade people, That all the matters of God and Religion, are of no great concernment, when they see, they are discours'd of sometimes for fashion, and in a form, by such as believe not what themselves say. They that preach thus, as it were, in jest, are not likely to bring others to practice in good earnest. And to speak all in a few words, Such *Preachers* and *Professors* (as before) if they would set their wits on work, to make all the World Atheist (as once it was Arian) cannot devise a more compendious way and method for the purpose.

But though such *Preachers* and *Professors* there be, yet whoever shall therefore stand off, or turn aside from the wayes of Gods Commandments, will in the day of account be inexcusably guilty before the Lord, of neglecting his duty. Is there so much as common sense, in saying,

saying, Why should I do what's good and right, when others do not? Even Reason may teach us, That since God is so much dishonour'd by the looseness of others, we should labour the more, by an unblameable conversation, to vindicate the honour of Gods Name, in despite of the Devil, and all his devices. For this ungodly humour in many, to cry down all Religion, and profession of it, upon the account of some Professors miscarriages, argues nothing more, than enmity against all godliness; which yet they would fain hide and excuse, by the faults of others, that pretend to more than themselves. He that's glad of any occasion, to pick (as we say) a quarrel with another, for certain hates him, and hath not the least respect for him. And to clear it yet farther:

Secondly, Such Wretches, when they can find no occasion, will be forward enough to feign and frame one. Hence have sprung all those reproachful nick-names, cast upon Professors, and the profession of Religion. Hence are false reports rais'd on purpose, to cause an Odium amongst all that hear of them. And if there were no more, I should say less. But God himself is reproached, and made to suffer. For all these lyes and falsities are intended, to make Religion and Godliness to be an abhorring (if it were possible) to all flesh. This, this is the design, that lies in the bottom, to render the wayes of God (in themselves most amiable) as odious as may be, so as men may have the greatest prejudice that's possible against them.

For

For when they have ſo diſguis'd them, they, and others have a fairer pretence to ſhun and ſcorn them. Thus, as little Children, they make the Bug-bears, wherewith they affright themſelves, and their fellows. And do as the Heathens of old, who firſt cloath'd poor Chriſtians in the ſpoyles of Beaſts, and then expos'd them to be worried, and torn in pieces by Lyons, and other ravenous Creatures.

There is certainly a beauty in Holineſs, and *all her wayes are wayes of pleaſantneſs, Pro.* 3. 17. But to a man in his natural condition, they are not pleaſing, but rather hateful and loathſome. And hence he doth by them, as men do by thoſe whom they hate, and cannot abide, render them in all companies, as odious as may be, that others may hate them, as well as themſelves do. When *John Hus* was brought forth to be burnt, his enemies put on his head a triple Crown of paper, painted over with Devils, and the Biſhops ſaid, when it was ſet on his head, *Now we commit thy Soul unto the Devil.* Such in a manner is the rage and madneſs of all ungodly men. They would damn, if they could, all whom they hate and perſecute for Chriſts ſake; and therefore raiſe the vileſt reports of them they can, to make the World believe, they are gone to Hell, as ſoon as they are gone hence. And why is all this adoe? Only to obſcure and ſtifle all the glorious beauty of holineſs, that ſhines in Gods Servants, ſo as it may not be ſeen. And this out of hatred againſt God, who ſett up his people, as ſo many Lights in the World, to ſhew men the way wherein they ſhould goe. But the World,

that

that lieth in wickedneſs, hates the good, and the right way; and therefore doth what it can, to put out thoſe Lights, and therein prove, that they love darkneſs. But however, all that pretend to the wayes of God, do not walk in them; yet (bleſſed be God) there have alwayes been ſuch, as will not be turn'd out of them, for all that can be ſaid or done againſt them. And theſe will be witneſſes one day, againſt all that have rejected them. And in this ſenſe (if in no other) *the Saints ſhall judge the World*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 2. Yea, in this ſenſe, they do now judge and condemn the World. Their piety, faith, holineſs, and fear of God, are a Light, and leave wicked men without excuſe: And as *Noah by his faith prepared an Ark, by which he condemn'd the World*, Heb. 11. 7. ſo do they. Some indeed, too many pretenders, have cauſed many to ſtumble and fall: But through the grace of God, all are not ſuch. As there is indeed, and in truth, ſuch a thing as true Holineſs; ſo there are *Iſraelites* indeed, *ſhining as lights, and holding forth the Word of life*, Philip. 2. 15, 16. And theſe Lights many times are ſo bright, as their enemies are forc'd to bear witneſs unto them, as *Saul* did to *David*, 1 *Sam.* 24. 17. *Thou art more righteous than I.* They cannot, after all their prying, find ſo much as a flaw in them, ſo as to have a juſt complaint againſt them. And this will be one day a convincing Argument againſt ungodly ones, That they had ſeen ſo many examples of thoſe, that loathed their wayes of exceſs, and ryot, and uncleanneſs, and yet refuſed to follow them; but rather ſet them at

nought,

nought, upon this account, That they would *not run into the same excess with themselves*, 1 *Pet.* 4 4. Now the reall Apologies of Christians examples, being so many witnesses for God, and his wayes, how can men say, They want Light, to shew them, what they have to do? How must they not one day be without all excuse, even upon this account?

Arg. 6. ANother Argument for proving my general Proposition, is this, That the failings of all men are mostly, if not altogether, in practice, so as they know, but do not. This shews, that 'tis not for want of light, that they walk on in darkness. The first and chiefest part of mans sinful corruption lieth in his will and affections. *The Woman indeed was deceiv'd*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 14. But it was by deceitful Lust, *Gen.* 3 6. *When she saw, that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eye, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of the fruit of it*, &c. It was the inordinacy of her appetite, that transported her to taste, what God had forbidden her, so much as to touch. I grant, she was deceiv'd, and that the Serpent deluded her, to believe a lye. And it is (I conceive) a truth, that in every evil, there is an error. Hence

Nullum unquam peccatum errore vacat. Nam ut maxime sciens, ac volens quis peccet, excæcatum tamen suâ cupiditate esse oportet, ne rectè judicet imò ut se ac Deum obliviscatur. Nunquam enim in suum exitium ruerent homines, nisi Satanæ fallaciis implicati, à rectò judicio aberrarent. Calv. in Ep. ad Hebr. c. 9. v. 7.

we

we read, *Heb.* 3. 13. of *the deceitfulness of sin*; and *Eph.* 4. 22. of *deceitful lusts*. We should not sin, if we were not deceiv'd. Lust is as a mist, that mis-leads us. A man that hath eyes, cannot see his way in a mist, but roves and runs up and down, and cannot hit on the right. A man would never chuse the worse, and leave the better, if he were not in a mistake. The Apostle describes the Gentiles, as *Strangers to the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them*, *Eph.* 4. 18. And the first work of grace on any soul, is, *to turn it from darkness unto light*, *Act.* 26. 18. And *to turn a man from the errour of his way*, *Jac.* 5. 20.

But all this (for ought I can see) doth not contradict what I said before, *viz.* That a mans inordinate affections, and his enraged appetite, do raise the mist, that clouds and darkens him, so as to wander after vanities and lyes, and *forsake his own mercies*. And all serves (as I suppose) to our present purpose. Men are commonly worse in their practices, than in their principles, as I said before; and yet I deny not, that they are corrupted in both. For it is not, to me, imaginable, how a man should be corrupted in one, and not in the other. But this we find by experience (which is all I mean) That men commonly have better principles than practices. Hence so many, that are sound in the Faith, as to their perswasions of the truth of Religion, in their lives are most abominable. And what need we any more witnesses, to convince and condemn these men? Their own opinions are enough to confute their practices, and prove

them

them rebels against the light. And can they complain, they have not light to see their way to Heaven? They have enough, and too much, unless they could use it better.

How usual is it for notorious Sinners, and most abominable vicious persons, to plead for the Ten Commandments, when I know no body against them, but such as they, and their fellows? They know, and can repeat the Ten Commandments, and say they are Gods Commandments: And yet a civil man cannot abide within the breach of these men, because every other word almost is an Oath with them. A man would hardly believe, that men should lead their lives all the week in such excess, and all manner of uncleanness, and yet on *Sundayes* cry out to devoutly (as they seem to do) at the reading of every Commandment, *Lord have mercy upon us, and encline our hearts to keep this Law.* Do not these men proclaim Gods commands to be their principles, and yet contradict them in all their practices? They dare not, they cannot for their hearts, say with their mouths, that Swearing, and Drunkenness, and Adultery, &c. are not Sins, and transgressions of Gods Laws; and yet they live in a constant practice of all such abominations.

Now what shall we think of these men? They have a Light sufficient to shew them the errour of their way. They do not indeed set it on a candlestick, but rather under a bushel. Though it be not quite put out, yet it shines not so, as they can see any thing by it, as they ought. And I can conceive no other reason, Why the light in

these

these men is so useless, but only that it was never strong enough, to work an absolute thorow conviction, as when *Gods Spirit convinceth of Sin*, &c. *Joan.* 16. 8. The lusts of these men were never subdued to the power of their principles. They could perhaps, some of them, discourse the vanity of the creature, and the emptiness of all worldly things, even to admiration; and yet all the while, love the World, and the things of the World, no men more. Grant that there is in such men sometimes a reluctancy, it cannot but be faint and feeble, and in effect as good as none at all. Nay, what if I say, it serves only to enhance their lusts the more, as weak opposition gives an enemy the greater advantage, to let out more of his rage and strength, than otherwise perhaps he would. Certainly, men so made up of a mixture of passion, and some reason, are as much plung'd into all sensual and bealtly pleasures, as any; because the stream of their lusts is stronger, than to be stopt by any principles they have. Yea, they are in a more ready way, to put darkness for light, and to call evil, good, than any men alive, so as at last, the light that is in them, is not better than the blackness of darkness. It was even so with the *Pharisees*, *Luc.* 16. 14. When our Saviour had most excellently discours'd the right use of all earthly riches, and shew'd, that men cannot serve God and Mammon, *They heard these things, and derided him.* A practice too common amongst others, when a savory Doctrine about some duty, press'd home upon Conscience, hath found no better entertainment with

many

many of the Auditors, than a dry ſcoff, or ſome bitter reproachful language againſt the Preacher. But why did the *Phariſees* deride our Saviour? There was a reaſon, and it is expreſs'd in the ſame place, *They were covetous. The love of money is the root of all evil*, 1 Tim. 6. 10. There never was an Heretique, or Apoſtate, or any man reprobate to every good work, that had not this, or ſome other root of bitterneſs ſpringing up, and turning him aſide to be hardned, paſt all hope, in his ungodly way. *Demas hath forſaken me*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. And if you read on, it is to be ſeen in the next words, Why? *He had embraced this preſent World.* All ages afford great ſtore of ſuch ſad Inſtances. Many, like *Jonathan*, (as one ſaith) follow the chaſe with a greedy purſuit, till they light on the honey. *Demas* had no ſooner left *Paul*, but *he went to Theſſalonica*, where he became an Idol-Prieſt, as ſome report. When ſuch men have been provoked, by miſſing of expected preferments, or have had the lure of promotion flung out to them, the next news you hear of them, is, that they are not where you left them, but are gone ſome-where; and if you deſire to know, look in *Jud. v.* 11. and you ſhall find, what way they are gone, and upon what account, and what will be the iſſue of all at laſt, if you pleaſe to obſerve that alſo by the way. They (you muſt know) hoyſe up, and ſtrike ſayl again, as the wind ſerves, and ſometimes tack about, only to ſteer a courſe, that will ſerve for preſent ſecurity, or future further advantages. When Religion is in faſhion, they preſently fall in with a

goodly out-side profeſſion, ſo as few can keep pace with them. But when once the wind, that was on their backs, begins to turn, and blow in their teeth, then (as we ſay) faces about, and who more zealous Perſecutors, than ſuch hot-ſpur Profeſſors?

Now may I not ſay of theſe, Have they not heard and known? Doubtleſs they cannot be ignorant. *Balaam* knew well enough, that he ought not to curſe *Iſrael*; and yet the wretched Wizard attempted it again and again, becauſe *he loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*; and *Balack's* proffer'd rewards blear'd his eyes, as he ſaw not, what he did ſee. So is it with every man, that hath no more grace than he. 'Tis no hard task for any man of ordinary underſtanding, to conclude, That the way of Uncleanneſs, Drunkenneſs, Swearing, *&c.* is not for profeſſed Chriſtians, or civil rational men to walk in. Yea, many have ſometimes reſolv'd againſt them, with vows and imprecations; and yet the next opportunity of a temptation breaks all theſe bonds, and the Doggs are *turned to their vomit again*. The reaſon of all is clearly to be ſeen, and it is this: They have their lucid intervals, as other madd men have; and then they can ſee a little, the baſeneſs of their own wayes. But as ſoon as Luſt is ſtirr'd, there riſes a miſt, and then they are as if they had no eyes; and whatever principles they have, they ſerve them for nothing that good is. The Light in theſe men, is as the uncertain blazings of a Candle, burnt down into the ſocket, that will not ſerve a man to do any work, and after it hath flaſh'd a while, goes

2 Pet. 2. 15.

2 Pet. 2. 22.

goes out with a snuffe, and a stink. 'Tis no long e're these men lye down in a dead sleep, and there's no hope of awakening them, after their interests and passions have subdued their principles, so as to have no more reflection upon their consciences and practices. These are a while perhaps Orthodox in their principles, but no thanks to them, for they are honest only, because not tempted to be otherwise; and being alwayes Hypocrites in heart, no marvel, if they come at last to be Heretiques, not only in their practices, but in their opinions also.

However, we must say of these, That *they say, and do not*: Or (which is all one) they know, and do not. They profess what they do not practice; and is not this enough to silence them, when they say, If we had known, we would have done better? For they lye in what they say; and if they had a mind to fight it out with their lusts, they would never complain, they have not Light enough. Mat. 23. 3.

No wicked men are so ignorant, as not to know, that they are out of the way: Only the violence of their sinful affections hurry them on against their reason. And will this (think you) excuse them? It may indeed blind them a while, but it will not bear them out, when God shall call to an account.

Argu. 7. AND now I shall a little enforce the former Reason, by adding another Argument, if you please so to call it, *viz.*

That prophane and ungodly wretches, who profeſs the Faith of Chriſt, do condemn themſelves, by allowing the practices of the Saints recorded in Scripture. They ſay, the Apoſtles, and others, were good men, and are now in Heaven. And what can they anſwer, if they be ask'd, Why do you not then trace their footſteps? They dare not ſay, Thoſe Saints in Heaven, (whom they ſo much magnifie) went thither in that way they themſelves walk in. And truly it is much, that ſome men ſhould ſo magnifie the dead Saints, and ſhew themſelves Devils all the while, in vexing thoſe that are alive. A man may truly ſay to thoſe wretches, That the Saints in Heaven, led not ſuch lives on Earth, as they do, and therefore will be witneſſes againſt them. I have heard indeed, that ſome impudent hardned Sinners have been ſo bold, as to ſpeak of the Saints infirmities, recorded in Scripture; as if their own enormities might be paſs'd over, as well. But if they were not unreaſonable, as well as ungodly, they might know, That thoſe good men once fell into great Sins, but did not lye in them, or make a trade of them. If theſe men would repent and turn, as thoſe Saints did, their caſe were quite otherwiſe, than now it is. Thoſe Saints were in their conſtant practice holy and righteous men, no ſuch debauch'd and vicious perſons as theſe. And how comes it to paſs, that they have ſo much reſpect for thoſe holy men, whoſe lives and converſations they never care to follow? Certainly, in honouring thoſe good men, they in a ſort allow of goodneſs and holineſs, and ſo condemn themſelves, in doing

contrary

contrary to what those men did. Saint *Paul*, and Saint *Peter*, and the rest, were men that led their lives in all puritie and holiness, free, and far from the pollutions, and unclean practices of these men, that so much cry them up. What do they then, in their thus magnifying the Saints of old? Why, they do, as the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, *Mat.* 23. 29. who built the Sepulchres of the Prophets, *&c.* and thereby laboured to gain a reputation with the vulgar, for bearing so much respect to the memorie of those men of God. For by this, they seemed to assert their Doctrine, and so would make the world believe, that they were zealous professors, and followers of that way of worshipping of God, which the old Prophets had taught long before. But alas! they were strangers, and enemies to all that the Prophets had taught, and practiced. And just such Hypocrites are others, who pretend to honour, and respect very much the old Saints, and Martyrs, and yet are in their affections, and conversations all one, with those that slew them, and shew'd all rage, and madness against them. Nor will it suffice to say, as the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees* did, *vers.* 30. *If we had been in the dayes of our Forefathers, we would not have been partakers with them, &c.* For (as one saith well on this place) an *Herod*, and *Herodias* to *John Baptist*, would have been an *Ahab*, and a *Jezabel* to *Elias*. They that declare against their Forefathers cruelties, do not thereby disclaim them; specially, when they are the same to good, and Godly men now, as their Fathers were to those of old. For what do many wicked wretches

hate, and scorn, and persecute now? Is it not the life of holiness, and power of Godliness; such as was in the Saints of old? Nay; they cannot abide to hear the very Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets preach'd to them, in the manner that the Apostles and Prophets preach'd it of old in their times. And do not these ungodly men prove by their dayly practices, that they are such as they who persecuted the Prophets, and Apostles. Well, however they have this as an evidence against them, that they seem'd so much to allow of Holiness and Godliness in the Saints departed, and yet walk'd clean contrary to them. They that will but observe the Acts of the Apostles, and their Epistles, may easily perceive the vast difference and dissimilitude, that is in the lives and doctrines of them, and these that pretend so much reverence to their names. And whatever men may imagine for a while, those old Saints will one day be so many swift witnesses against all that have seemed to reverence their memories, and yet never imitated their examples. For the most they do, is no more than the Pope doth. He is (if you will believe him) *Peter's* Successor, but for Life and Doctrine how like to *Peter*, any man may see that reads the Scripture. Even as many others, who would be thought of the same Religion with the Primitive Christians and antient Martyrs, but if they would live as holily and unblameably as they did, what they say would be sooner believed by others, than now it can be.

Arg.

Arg. 8. MEn say, they want light, and means to know, and do better; but they lie in so saying: for they will not endure sound doctrine, nor any that preach it. In this I appeal to the practice of ungodly men in all ages, which furnish us with Instances enough, of such Rebels against the light. For Scripture-instances, they are well known to all that have read the Bible: There is to be seen, how the *Jews* mocked the Lords messengers, and despised his Prophets; so as *Stephen* makes the challenge, *Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted?* And what they did to Gods servants, the Prophets, the same and worse they did to him that was the Son of God; *They cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him*, *Mat.* 21. 39. And afterwards held on to persecute the Apostles and other dispensers of Gospel-grace, seeking, if it had been possible, to extinguish that light which the Sun of righteousness had brought into the world. And was it not so with others afterwards? how long did the *Roman* Heathen Emperours persecute the Faith of Christ, in the preaching and profession of it? In one word, they did what they could, to make the name of Christ and Christian to be no more remembred. And for their Successors, (excepting *Constantine* the Great, and some that succeeded him at times,) they drave on the [illegible]icked design, though in a way somewhat differing: *Julian* (who came not long after *Constantine*) is infamous among all to this day, for his Apostasie

1 Chron. 36. 16. Acts 7. 52.

and politick designs to root out all Christianity. And what hath been since done by the power of the Beast, is well known to all that felt his clutches by sad experience, and to all others by certain report. The Gospel is still, through Gods mercie, preach'd and professed, yea more openly and avowedly in this and the last Age, than in many Ages before. But no thanks to many ungodly men, who have let the Light shine, because they could not put it out. Who hath not read, or heard what hazards the first Reformers ran, and what despightfull opposition they met withall? and to this day, how impatient are many of some kinde of Preachers and Preaching? O the frequent quarrels that have been against the most able and painfull Ministers, for nothing but their labours and endeavours to turn the people committed to their charge, from their ungodly wayes! The same Spirit that swayed the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and others against our Saviour, in his time on earth, breathing still in too many, who will have always somewhat to say against faithfull and painfull Ministers, as the *Jews* had against Christ, though to no purpose more, than to bewray their own ignorance, malice, and madness. And I shall now give some instances, as I finde them, that so men may see themselves precedented in the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and Infidel hard-hearted *Jews* that liv'd in our Saviours time. *Mat.* 22. 23. The Sadducees could not believe the Resurrection, and a stout Argument they bring to puzzle our Saviour withall; an instance of a Woman that had seven Husbands successively, *&c.*

and

and what did all this prove more, than their ignorance of Scripture, as Christ tells them? *verſ.* 29. At another time, when ſome ſaid, *This is the Christ*; others ſaid, *Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Joan.* 7. 41. and they alledge Scripture for it, That *Christ cometh out of Bethlehem, v.* 42. and this bred a quarrel among them, of which there was no cauſe, nor the leaſt occaſion, more than their own Ignorance: for had they had more grace, or wit, they might eaſily have reconciled themſelves by knowing that Christ was born in *Bethlehem*, though bred up in *Galilee*, for good reaſon, according to the Scripture, *Mat.* 2. 23. Such was their exception againſt Christ, *Joan.* 6. 42. *Is not this the ſon of Joſeph?* He was indeed *God manifeſt in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. and the Scriptures had plainly enough pointed him out as *Abraham's* Seed, and *David's* Son. To ſay no more in this kind; Nothing but ignorance of the myſterie of Faith, and a froward humour could make them ſay, *How can this man give us his fleſh to eat, Joan.* 6. 52. it ſhews they had a minde to quarrel, and nothing elſe; as when *Joan.* 7. 15. they askt, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* ſaith *Calvin* on the place, *Hoc ipſo deſpiciunt gratiam Dei, quia ipſorum captum ſuperat. Nam ea eſt hominum ingratitudo, ut in æſtimandis Dei operibus, ſemper ſibi occurſant errandi materiam:* Men ſtudy wayes and means to make themſelves miſtake, when they have to deal in the matters of God, and their own ſalvation: they are blind enough in the things of Gods kingdome, and yet quick-ſighted too in deviſing ſtumbling-blocks to hinder

hinder themſelves and others from obtaining a ſound and ſaving knowledge of the truth. And hence, *Joan.*7. 28. when they were a quarrelling, and ſaying, *When Chriſt cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*, he cryed in the Temple as he taught, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am. Where* (ſaith *Calvin*) *Chriſt inveighs againſt their madneſs, that pleaſing themſelves in their falſe conceits of him, they ſhut up againſt themſelves the right way of knowing him as they ought*: as if he ſhould have ſaid, *By your knowing all things, you know nothing at all.* And ſo they were, as ſome ſince, apt to pick quarrels with ſome Miniſters eſpecially, and to gain a reputation of knowing men, do talk at a very high rate of others low parts, and learning: Theſe are the Champions, that lead up others to quarrel all Doctrines preach'd, unleſs they pleaſe their humour, or ſute with their high-flown conceits and notions: but (as *Calvin* hath it ſomewhere,) *There is no worſe plague or peſtilence can take hold of men, than to be intoxicated with a conceit of their own underſtanding, and to be carried by it, to a confident ſlighting whatever agreeth not with their own opinion*; ſuch great Rabbies are ready to ſay, *This people who knoweth not the Law, are curſed*; they know ſo much, as others can know nothing; and yet know nothing as they ought to know, or what's worth others learning; ſeeing in their lives they ſavour nothing of true Religion and Godlineſs: whatever their Learning be, their Religion (if any) is very ordinary, and they are ignorant enough too of the right way and method of bringing poor ignorant ſouls to the ſound and ſaving know-

Joan. 7. 49.

knowledge of Christ. There is (let me say) a simplicity in the mysterie of Christ, and of Godlineſs, which if a man once favour, he hath the only beſt way to teach others convincingly, and he that's not acquainted with it, will be but a ſounding braſs, and a tinckling Cymbal, though he ſhould ſpeak with the tongue of men and Angels. And therefore, if the men that quarrel the ſimplicity of Preaching, that ſuites beſt with the capacities of people, be not guilty of ignorance, it is to be feared, there is ſomewhat elſe as bad, or rather much worſe. They had need look, that this quarrelſom humour proceed not from a root of malice, and enmitie againſt the things of God, as I fear it doth, for the Myſteries of Gods kingdome being of higheſt concernment, and moſt excellently uſefull to all, deſerve none of our quarrellings. But when men cannot abide to deny their humours and intereſts, to receive the kingdome of God as little children, no marvel if they kindle a fire, and are all in a flame, even to rage againſt God and his pure Word, which becauſe they are aſham'd to own, they muſt colour it over with ſomewhat that may be thought worthy of their indignation. And 'tis ſtrange to ſee, how witty the moſt are, to cover the ſhame of their malice, in deviſing and finding out occaſions of quarrelling at thoſe things which concern their Salvation. Sometimes they have quarrell'd a Miniſters infirmities of body, which are not his ſins, but his ſufferings, and if they can ſpy out any other failings, (though no more than infirmities, incident to the beſt of men) what ſad work will their little wit make of them, to hold

up

up a curſed prejudice againſt all that is taught them, in order to the ſaving of their ſouls? Sometimes he is a man of no great parts, and ſometimes he is not ſo well bred, as to know very much of complement; or his utterance is bad, or ſomewhat elſe there is, that they do not like him: ſome are too wordly, and many are too faſhionable. And I verily believe, there is not one of them without his faults; nor am I now about to excuſe any thing that's blame-worthy. Onely, I ſay again, there's a root of bitterneſs in the hearts of all men, and from this root ſpring all, or moſt of the quarrels, that are againſt painful, and faithful Miniſters. Were it not for this, men could never be ſo apt to pick up, and ſpy out ſo many occaſions of exception againſt them. In a word, They like not the Doctrine, and how ſhould they be pleaſed with him that brings it? He that likes not the Phyſick, will never be pleaſed with the Doctour, whatever he be. Truly, that which the Holy Ghoſt hath recorded of *Ahab* is worthy our obſervation: when *Jehoſhaphat* ſaid, *Is there not here a Prophet of the Lord beſides, that we might enquire of him?* Yes ſaith *Ahab*, *there is yet one man, but I hate him; for he doth not propheſie good concerning me, but evil*, 1 *Reg.* 22. 8. he confeſſes him to be a Prophet of the Lord, but yet he cannot away with him, and you ſee his reaſon for it. Alas! what ſhould a man of God (as *Micaiah* was) propheſie other than evil, concerning ſuch a one as *Ahab*, *who had ſold himſelf to work wickedneſs in the ſight of the Lord*, 1 *Reg.* 21. 20. I know no occaſion given by ſome Miniſters, more than

Micaiah

Micaiah gave to *Ahab*; and yet they are hated. And therefore the quarrels of many (whatever they say) are against God, and his Word. 'Twas God that put the word into the mouth of *Micaiah*, and 'tis God that puts the sentence of condemnation into the mouths of Ministers, that ungodly Sinners are damn'd, if they live and die impenitent. And all these quarrelsome people cannot but know, it is so. And yet they quarrel the Ministers, for preaching damnation, and driving men to despair. For my part, I never knew, or heard of a Minister, that had forgotten God and himself so farr, as to pass sentence upon Sinners, otherwise than as God hath pass'd it in his written Word, and as Christ hath twice expressed it, *Luc.* 13. *v.* 3, and 5. *Except ye repent, ye shall perish.* And this exception is alwayes intended and implyed, though in many Texts of Scripture it be not express'd *in terminis*. And thus the most thundring denunciations of vengeance, against ungodly Sinners, from the Ministers, should be by all understood; so as there would be no quarrel upon that account, if there were not in mens hearts a root that beareth gall and poyson. *Ro.* 2. 8. The Apostle joyns the contentious, and the disobedient together. And why? Because they never goe asunder. When a man cannot frame himself to obey, then he seeks out some occasion or other, to contend against the truth; else how shall he satisfie himself and others in his disobedience? Seldome do men arrive at such an height of desperate rebellion against God, as to proclaim their enmity, with open mouth, in plain down-right terms: No,

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there must be some colour, and this is one, That they are not satisfied about their Ministers. And 'tis not strange, for they are indeed unsatisfied with the very Word of God. And hence some are ever and anon questioning, how such or such a place of Scripture may be reconcil'd with another. Now, for my part, I blame no man for seeking to satisfie himself in any seeming contradiction: And more than seeming, I am sure, there is none, unless the Transcriber, or Printer, may have abused the Text in some one Copy or Edition. But men had need look to their own hearts, whether there be not an inward secret desire, to find out somewhat, that may countenance that contradiction, which is naturally in all men against the Laws & Wills of God. One thing I have observ'd too often, That some are very inquisitive this way, who seem not to be overmuch affected towards Scripture: Or, however they be affected, they shew little conformity to it in their conversations.

Now, my advice, upon this occasion, is, That most men would let more difficult places of Scripture alone, and study those which are more easie to be understood. There can be nothing plainer than Gods Commandments, and all those Precepts which concern our duty in denying all ungodliness, *&c.* In all those, I am sure, there is not the least shew of contradiction. And for the places that seem not so well to agree, let the advice of sober and learned men be desired, with an unfeigned intention, to know the mind of God, in order to our practice. 'Tis the observation of one, *That it is the sign of a man inclin'd*

to

to Atheism, to keep a register of many difficult places, not to be satisfied himself, but to puzzle others. Sure, they that are often in setting many places of Scripture to fight one against another, may be suspected of a desire to make a real contradiction, where there is but a seeming one. To say no more of this, The contradictions in Scripture, that seem so to us, are not therefore such indeed; and if we, and others, cannot reconcile them, we should rather impute ignorance to our selves, and think, that we mistake things that differ, as if they were contradictory.

The Argument I have next before prosecuted, was drawn from the aptness that is in most to quarrel their Ministers. And what manner of Ministers are they, who are so much expos'd to quarrels? To be sure, they are none of the worst. For they that are so apt to quarrel some, upon any account, can like others well enough, though indeed they deserve little respect, being the unsavory salt, fit for no place, but the dunghill. But they like them well enough; the worse they are in themselves, the better they are to them. If the Ministers will deal by them (as *David* would have had his beloved *Absalom* dealt withall) gently and fairly, and not speak too loud, for fear of waking them, 'tis as much as they care for. So there be somewhat, call'd Preaching, and the Minister be sometimes in the Pulpit, no great matter what he, or his preaching be. They love a Sermon, that will lay them asleep; and sometimes [illegible] what, that will set them (perhaps) a laughing. And when 'tis so, they can sit out a whole glass, and have

have much patience. But they cannot abide rayling (as they call it.) They would have Preachers keep to their Texts, when indeed they cannot abide ſound Doctrine, that ranſacks Conſcience, and ſearcheth out their ſins, though it be deliver'd in the very language of Scripture, and be the expreſs Doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles. And yet they are pleas'd at heart many times, to hear, that which is rayling indeed, that is, Gibing, and jeering, and girding at the wayes of truth and holineſs, under ſuch nicknames and miſpriſions, as the Devil hath devis'd to put upon them. Theſe are the men, that in all their lives, never met with any ſolid Arguments, or Reaſons ſufficient to convince them. They could never light on ſuch preaching, or Preachers, as could perſwade them to goe in ſome mens wayes of preciſeneſs, or prevail with them to change their way. And all this is too true, and I am ſorry for it; though not ſo ſad, as theſe men will be one day, if they be no better perſwaded. True, they have heard ſome of thoſe Miniſters, that are ſo much cryed up by ſome; but they could never ſee in them, any ſuch light, as was to them convincing. And all this I believe, without any more proof, though it be nothing to their purpoſe. There were multitudes that heard the Son of God preaching to them, and were not perſwaded or convinced, but many were the more hardned: What then? Was it becauſe there was not light enough in the Sun of Righteouſneſs, that ſo many did not ſee it? He knew well enough how to preach ſo, as the Auditory might be moſt profited. *He taught,*

as

as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. Mat. 7. 29. *Never man spake, as he spake,* Joan. 7. 46. *At* Nazareth *all bare him witness, and wondred at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth,* Luc. 4. 22. And yet were offended at him, as appears in the next words: *Is not this* Joseph's *Son?* So it is still (as one saith on that place) *The course of our Hearers is, to look round about, if possibly they may find any hole in our coat, through which to slight, and slip the cords of our Doctrine, though they cannot but admire it. Our Saviours Doctrine was not his own, but his Fathers that sent him,* Joan. 7. 16. And for the manner, *He had the tongue of the Learned,* Isay 50. 4. He deliver'd himself so plainly, that the simplest might understand him; and yet so powerfully, that his enemies confess'd, *He taught the way of God truly,* Mat. 22. 14. He was none of those illiterate, careless, and cold Preachers, that can only tire out their Auditors, or lull them asleep. And yet all his labour was in vain, as to the most of those that heard him. Surely the fault was in them. For they must needs have seen the glorious Light, that shin'd in his Sermons, if they had not shut their eyes, that they might not see it. We may well think of them, as of others, who will goe after their blind guides, even when the light of the glorious Gospel shines most clearly before them. Our Saviour in the dayes of his flesh, was as much cryed down by many, yea, as any of his Servants since, or before. *This is an hard saying, who can hear it?* Joan. 6. 60. So spake some of his Doctrine. Yet there are none amongst us,

but will ſay, It was the fault of his Auditors; and that all his Doctrine was true, and right, and good. If an Angel from Heaven ſhould preach the Goſpel of Chriſt, he ſhould not perſwade, or pleaſe ſome men. And 'tis no marvel, ſeeing God himſelf could not preach to perſwade the unbelieving *Jews*. There's light enough in the Sun, though blind folk cannot ſee it. Surely, the light of Goſpel-grace hath broken out, and ſhone moſt gloriouſly in theſe our times, though many thouſands have ſhut their eyes againſt it, and ſtill remain in the blackneſs of ſin and ignorance, *becauſe they loved darkneſs rather than light*, Joan. 3. 19. And as light as men make of it now, *God will come, and not keep ſilence; a fire ſhall devour before him, and it ſhall be very tempeſtuous round about him: He ſhall call to the Heavens from above, and to the Earth, that they may judge his people.* His people are *Iſrael* after the fleſh *, ſuch as were outwardly in Covenant with him, and an holy Nation, to whom were committed the Oracles of God, as they are now to others. They are in our Engliſh Tranſlation call'd *his Saints*, or *holy ones*; by others, his *meek ones*. The Original (as farr as I underſtand) notes thoſe that have obtained favour and kindneſs from the Lord: So had all *Abrahams* Seed, in compariſon of the *Gentiles*; though we may ſay with good reaſon, that all are ſo called, becauſe ſome among them were truly ſanctified, inwardly and really in Covenant with God. Certain it is, that God in that place, ſounds an alarum to all ungracious and hypocritical profeſſors, that applaud themſelves in the ceremonious out-

Pſal. 50. 3, 4.

* Saints at large.

Exod. 19. 6.

outside of true Religion, when they are as farr from the life and power of it, as professed Infidels. Such are too many now adayes, that have nothing of true Religion, beside the name and profession; shewing in their lives and conversations, an implacable dislike of true holiness. They will abide no more, than a bare outside form of somewhat that's call'd Religion; and a Ministry they will have for the management of this Religion, as suitable as *Jeroboams* Priests were to his Calves. As for such a dispensation of Gods Ordinances, as hath life and power in it, they will not endure it; for they are resolv'd to serve their lusts, in all manner of unrighteousness and ungodliness. And these are the men, that cry out, they are not satisfied in their Consciences, but they must have more Light to convince them, and better Arguments to perswade them, or ever they can embrace those precise wayes, which some would have to be the only good way, that leads men to their happiness. Such were the *Jews* of old, that persecuted the Prophets, and would abide none, but those that cryed peace, peace to them, even whilst they walked after their own imaginations, and did those things that brought upon them the curse and vengeance that God had threatned against them. Now, whether these, and such as these, have any just cause to complain of God, for being wanting to them in the means of Grace, and saving Knowledge, let any judge. I must proceed.

Arg. 9. TO all aforesaid, I shall add that humour in many, so like to what was in the Scribes, and Pharisees, and others in our Saviours time, who would have of him a sign from Heaven. So are many now adayes, that cannot be satisfied, without some extraordinary appearances of God, that may be an infallible Demonstration of the Doctrines, so much commended to them, for their instruction in righteousnes. No question, they that have fill'd the World with stories of strange Miracles, pretended to be done by their Party, in all ages, for confirmation of their way, were sufficiently aware of this humour in men; and the Apostle hath given all the World a fair warning of it; 2 *Thess.* 2. 9, 10. The rich man in Hell was of the mind, *That if one went from the Dead unto his Brethren, they would repent.* But we have no great cause to be much taken with his opinion, when we consider in what place he was, specially when we have the opinion of *Abraham* in Heaven to the contrary. He was indeed in a great mistake, as well as many others on Earth. An uncircumcised heart will not regard the commands of God, though they be sent by the hand of an Angel. *Israel* had the Law from the mouth of God himself, and yet they continued not in his Covenant *. Many instances there have been of men, that, in the midst of Gods most terrible and miraculous appearances, have taken occasion of letting out their malice the more. *Israel provoked God at the Sea, even at the Red Sea,* Psa. 106. 7. Psa. 78. 32. *For all this*

Mat. 16. 1.

Luc. 16. 30, 31.

* Read *Act.* 4. 16, 17. where we have an Instance, what Miracles will do upon some men.

this they ſinned ſtill, and believed not for his wondrous works. I will not ſay, that all wicked men have been alwayes alike affected, as they were then and there: For Gods Judgements in the Earth, have ſometimes cool'd the courage of his ſtouteſt enemies, ſo as they have not dared to go forward, as otherwiſe they would have done. The Plagues upon *Egypt*, put *Pharaoh* ſometimes into a good mood, and made him to relent a little for the preſent: But he was never the better, though awed a while by the hand of God againſt him. We read indeed, *Act.* 9. 6. that the Lord Jeſus appeared to *Saul* (afterwards call'd *Paul*) in a dreadful manner, and ſtruck him down to the ground, in order to his converſion: But that was only to tame him, that ſo he might be talk'd withall. If the Lord had then left him, and taken no more thought and care of him, I may well queſtion, whether *Saul* would have ever been the better man, for that terrible appearance of God to him. Sure I am, that God inſtructed him by his own immediate voice from Heaven, and then afterwards ſent him to *Ananias*, by whom (as a Miniſter of God) he was taught, what he muſt do. And if it had not been thus, we may juſtly doubt, whether *Paul* had ever been ſetled in a ſound belief, or encouraged to a zealous profeſſion, and preaching of the Goſpel. I am willing to grant, That the Lord hath taken ſome ſuch courſe with ſome others, for their converſion: I mean, He hath, by his hand, brought them down to the earth, and made afflictions to tame their proud and haughty Spirits, ſo as they have ſaid, It was good

for them, that they were so handled and humbled. But afflictions do but tame men, Gods Word and Spirit alone teach them, and bring the heart to a due acknowledgement of Gods authority. And this is certain, because though some have been wrought upon by Gods more than ordinary appearances to them, in his providential dispensations, yet others have remain'd as *Pharaoh* did, and never were humbled so, as to make their peace with God. Men may think, if an Angel from Heaven did preach to them, or a damned Soul from Hell appear to them, to confirm by their testimony, the truths that are often tendred them, by men like themselves, they should certainly believe, and obey, and make no further question; But they know not of what Spirit they are. Never was there such a sign from Heaven, as the Son of God dwelling in our flesh; and yet how little were the *Jews* satisfied with it? No, not in the least, but they must have some other sign to demonstrate him, to be what he was, or else they could not believe on him. Yea, and though they had their desire in this also, yet all was to as little purpose! *For though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him,* Joan. 12. 37. If any suppose, they could not see the Sun of Righteousness, because he was clouded over with our flesh; I say, That that veil served only to allay the exceeding brightness of his glory, which otherwise no mortal eye could have been able to approach or behold. It did not hide him so, as they could not possibly see him, but it shewed him so, as they might be able to look on him, as we

can

can abide to look on the Sun, shining through a bright cloud, which would dazle, and almost put out our eyes, if it shin'd out in his full strength. And therefore our Saviour appeals to his works and doings, which were abundantly enough to shew, what he was, though covered under a cloud. *If I had not done among them the works that no other man did* (saith he) *they had not had sin: But now have they both seen, and hated both me, and my Father*, Joan. 15. 24. Where by [WORKS] he means all the evidences and demonstrations of his Divine power, given by him, for their conviction. And to instance only in one. Did ever man command and controll the Devil, as he did, and that only in his own name and power? This work of his, was such a clear and undeniable proof, as he thereupon charged some of them with the unpardonable sin, *Because they said, he had an unclean Spirit*, *Marc.* 3. 30. They said, that what he did, was no more, than what Witches and Conjurers can do, by virtue of a compact; when they could not but see, it was by the finger and power of God. This was blasphemy, not of ignorance, as *Pauls* was, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. but of voluntary contumacy. For (as *Calvin*) *They sin against the Holy Ghost, who maliciously pervert, to Gods dishonour and reproach, the mighty works of God, manifested to them by his Spirit for this end, that they might thereupon shew forth his glory; and so profess themselves enemies of God, such as the Devil is.* Hence our Saviour chargeth them with malice, *Joan.* 15. 24. *Ye have seen and hated both me, and my Father*; because they

they ſo baſely undervalued and blaſphemed that power, which ſhewed it ſelf in him, to be altogether Divine. For he was not wanting to the work, which his Father had given him to do; and that work was, to ſhew himſelf to the World, to be, as he was, the Son of God. For this end and purpoſe he did, what no other had done, or could do. But all could not ſatisfie *an evil and adulterous Generation*, as he calls them, *Mat.* 12. 39. They were ſtill calling upon him for a ſign from Heaven. He had done indeed ſome miracles (they could not deny it) in curing ſome poor, ſick and leprous perſons: But what were theſe? Not enough, nor great enough to convince them, that he was the very Chriſt. *They muſt have a ſign from Heaven*, ſuch as *Joſhua* ſhewed, when the Sun ſtood ſtill, *Joſ.* 10. 12. Or as *Eſaias* ſhewed, when the Sun went backward, 2 *Reg.* 20. 11. Or as *Moſes* ſhewed, when he made bread to come down from Heaven. And this laſt they mention, *Joan.* 6. 30, 31. *What ſign ſheweſt thou, that we may ſee, and believe thee? Our Fathers did eat Manna, as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven.* They muſt have ſuch a demonſtration, as might be an evidence beyond all contradiction. Alas! Our Saviour knew, as well as themſelves, nothing he could do, would keep them from contradicting him. 'Twas only a vain and wicked pretence in them, that if they could be aſſured, he was the Meſſias, they would forthwith believe in him. But they diſſembled, and Chriſt calls them Hypocrites, *Luc.* 12. 56. And *he ſighed deeply in his Spirit*, *Marc.* 8. 12. knowing it was their hardneſs and malice, to make ſo much adoe about miracles.

And

And this he proves, *Luc.* 12. 56. *Ye can discern the face of the Sky*, &c. They were wise enough in other matters, and could make observations one day, what weather would be the next. And therefore he pincheth them close, *v.* 57. *Yea, and why even of your selves judge ye not what is right?* If they would but have examin'd their own Consciences, and enquired there, what was right, and to be resolved upon in the case, they need be no longer in doubt. I have been the larger in this Instance, because it serves to shew, what Spirit they are of, who are ever and anon harping upon the same string, and making in a manner the same demands. O! If they had but a sign from Heaven, if they could once be certainly assur'd of such and such matters, what would not they do? They are as ready, as any men alive, to receive and entertain whatever shall be offer'd to them, as the mind and command of God. 'Tis pity they should live, that are otherwise minded. But you must bear with them, if they are not so well satisfied with some things; For truly (believe them he that list) they never had light clear enough as yet, to convince them. If these Preachers, and they that pretend so much to preciseness, could but shew some sign from Heaven, could but give some evidence of their way, such as could not be contradicted, they need not compass Sea and Land to make Proselytes, For they, and many more, would be at their devotion.

But all this while, these men, that cannot be satisfied with any Arguments, can satisfie themselves in the constant practice of such abominations,

ons, as the Heathens would be ashamed of, and swallow down every day such foul evils, as the Light of Nature and Reason have sufficiently discover'd to all. Truly these men are sick of the *Jews* disease, who expected a Messiah, such as God never promis'd or intended; and when the Messiah came in another way than they counted on, they would none of him, he was not for their turn, what should they do with such a one? Or what could he do for them? They must have a Messiah to reign in all worldly pomp and state, so as they might be a people, to rule over all the Nations. A poor despised fellow, with a few Fishermen to attend him, to be the Messiah, so long expected. They can never be perswaded to this, unless there were more cogent Arguments, than he had given them. Just so do others fancy to themselves a way to Heaven, such as God never counted upon; but the way of God indeed, such as Christ hath laid out in his Word, and traced it himself before them, a way of self-deniall, and crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts; who shall perswade them, that this is the way to Heaven? They can never believe it, unless a man come from the Dead to assure them of it. And so they go on quarreling with any thing, that looks but like true Religion, and Holiness, and circumspect walking, which Scripture makes the only way to Heaven. They see no such thing in Scripture, nor can those strait lac'd Preachers say enough to perswade them, there's any necessity of so much preciseness, unless they could work some strange and unheard of thing, to demonstrate their nice

opinions.

opinions. And for the parts and gifts of thoſe Preachers, they know not but ſome others have as much learning as they, and yet are not of their mind. They muſt therefore do ſomewhat more than ordinary, or theſe men will never be perſwaded to their way. To theſe men I ſhall ſay no more, than that the mind of God in Scripture hath as full and uncontrollable authority, as any extraordinary Revelations poſſibly can have; and let them except what they can, I'le undertake to ſhew as much, and more to be excepted againſt any way of Revelation which they would have. They who are not ſatisfied with Scripture, will be ſatisfied with nothing, whatever ſome pretend or imagine. And to ſay no more, it is a moſt abſurd and unreaſonable thing, for any man to expect Revelations of Gods will, in an extraordinary way, when he hath ſo fully and plainly made known all things, in a way leſs lyable to exception than any other. 'Twere eaſie to ſhew, how hard it would be for moſt men to diſcern true miracles from falſe. And what a buſineſs would it be, for every particular perſon to have a particular Revelation. Beſides, ſuch appearances of God would be more dreadful to poor Creatures. Not to ſay, how often the Devil might transform himſelf into an Angel of light. Whereas Scripture is a ſure word, that hath been tryed, and alwayes found conſtant and conſiſtent with it ſelf. And for the truth of it, (if there were no more) it may contend upon rational grounds, for probability, with any pretence, that hath been, or (I think) can be to the contrary. And therefore to thoſe that muſt

2 Pet. 1. 19.

have

have extraordinary wayes to convert them, I say they are tempters of God, in tying him to miracles, when he hath appointed ordinary means and do in effect refuse the food that's offer'd them, looking when God will rain bread from Heaven upon them.

Arg. 10. THat I may yet further evidence, that men want not Light, but only neglect the means allowed them, I give this Reason, That so many make a kind of profession, to be what indeed they are not, and cannot abide to be counted as they are, and to be call'd by their own names. They that are as debauch'd as any miscreants on earth, will not abide to be so accounted, yea, will avouch themselves to be farr otherwise. He that uses deceit in bargaining upon all occasions, would be thought as honest as any man alive. *The Adulterer waiteth for the twilight*, Job 24. 15. And the *Adulteress wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness*, Pro. 30. 20. Now, when the vilest of men give it out, and would have others believe, that they are such as they should, and ought to be, is not this an Argument of conviction, that they do know what they ought to do, and do the contrary? Where do you meet with any, that will openly proclaim their wickedness, or affirm that vices are vertues; that Drunkenness, Swearing, *&c.* are duties that ought to be done? No, for the most part, men are asham'd, and will not own these; and yet continuing

tinuing in the practice of them, do they not sin condemn'd of themselves? They do know the baseness of their evil wayes, and notwithstanding goe on in them. And with what face can they plead, That if they had known the good, and the right way, they would have walked in it? Wherefore they shall be their own Judges, when they are to be condemn'd before the Lord at the last day.

Arg. 11. AND why do many betake themselves to d somewhat for making their peace (as they pretend) with God? This (if there were nothing else) serves to prove, they are somewhat convinc'd of their wayes and doings, that they are not so good as they should be. But in the doing of it, they discover the wretched untowardliness of their hearts, and how little they prize the things which God hath promised to all them that diligently seek him. For commonly they betake themselves to pitiful poor shifts. It may be, when they are going out of the world, they can find in their hearts to spare a little somewhat to some good uses, after they have all their life long been making more poor, than all their estates are able to relieve. Yea, done more wrong, than their estates are able to recompence. And some will keep their Church better, than ever before, if they live to it; and sometimes read a Chapter, or in some good Book. But for ransacking of Conscience, and ripping up old sins to the bottom, and renouncing

cing the vain wayes, whereunto they are (as all others) inclin'd, and turning from all iniquity, and betaking themſelves to the moſt ſtrict and preciſe way of walking with God, *in all his Commandments blameleſs, as* Zechariah *and* Elizabeth *did*, Luc. 1. 6. As they never knew before, what belongs to them, ſo they are ſtill willing to let them alone. They cannot be ignorant (unleſs willingly) that their duty is to be humbled, as low as Hell, and to receive the ſentence of death in themſelves, and ſhew it in all poſſible contrition and humiliation, and denying themſelves in all they formerly delighted in, and in walking ſo, as all that ſee them, may have cauſe to ſay, Surely God hath wrought ſome great change upon them. But they can content themſelves with leſs, and hope, God will be as well pleas'd with it, as they themſelves are. So you ſhall have ſome turn'd, it may be, from open prophaneneſs and debauchery, to a more ſober civil way of life, and perhaps ſomewhat of an empty outſide formality. This is an acknowledgement, that God muſt have ſomewhat more, than he hath had formerly. But this poor pittance will be a ſtrong evidence againſt them one day, that they did not follow hard after God, as they might and ſhould have done. For if men did not wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt the light that ſhines in Scripture, to ſhew the good and right way of ſeeking after God, they could not but know, that the utmoſt degree of ſelf-denial and mortification, with deepeſt humiliation before God, and all holy converſation and godlineſs, is the only way to

find

find him. Such slight work as they make, serves only to shew, they are not willing to do better, and therefore can in reason expect no great reward. For (I say again) men cannot be ignorant (except willingly) that the enjoying of God for their portion, is so rare and rich a prize, as nothing can be thought enough for procuring it; and such a slight dealing in a matter of so great concernment, is an Argument to evidence, that they goe against their own light, and so are condemned of themselves.

And what do many in the whole course of their lives, more than trifle about somewhat, which is indeed nothing to any purpose? They know after a sort, the only true way to eternal life, which is believing on the Son of God. They are also (we suppose it however) sober and civil in their behaviour towards others. But for their Religion towards God, it being (we grant) as to the outward profession, right as it should be, they content themselves with the outside, which is the easiest part of it, being least irksome to the flesh, and that which pinches least upon their worldly and fleshly interests. And thus they approve their skill, in finding out an easie way to Heaven. For this I may (I hope) affirm without offence to any, That the Protestant Religion (so called, and to me the only true Religion) in the bodily exercise, and outside observance, is farr more easie than any other. And there is good reason for it, seeing the grace of God, in these Gospel-times, calls mostly for worshipping God in the Spirit. The Jews had an hard task (indeed a kind of bondage)

dage) in the outside of Gods service, which put them to great pains and cost. But Christians now have as little as may be of the bodily exercise, because the more full discoveries of Gospel-grace call us now, to offer up our selves, as so many living Sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, and call'd a reasonable service, because according as God hath prescrib'd. And 'tis indeed the main and chiefest part of Gods service now, to mortifie our earthly members, and crucifie the flesh, with the affections and lusts; with abridging our selves in all that may gratifie Self; conforming our selves, and coming as near as possible, to that more blessed and glorious life, wherein there will be no use or need at all of these present comforts and accommodations.

Now what do many call'd Protestants other, than by their practices deny the great things of the Gospel, and contradict our Saviour Jesus Christ, in what he said, *Mat.* 7. 14. That the gate which leads to life eternal, is strait, and the way narrow? For they make it as wide and easie as any man can devise to make it. Surely it is no hard labour to goe to Church once in a week, and receive the Sacrament once or twice in a year, and say over by rote a few conn'd Prayers once or twice in a day, when they are half asleep: And yet this is the most service that many do to God, and it may be doubted if many do so much. Now, if the course these men take, be the good, and the right way, they need not strive much, the gate is wide, and the way is broad enough, who can miss it, or goe beside it? Questionless, the very Heathens serve the Devil, and

and their Idols, at more coſt, and charge, and pains taking, than all this comes to. To ſpeak as it is, the true Religion is the moſt eaſie of all others, as to the outward bodily exerciſe; and all the difficulty that attends it, is in Self-denial, being crucified to the World; and in the more ſpiritual part of worſhip; whiles a man labours to keep his heart in a due frame and order, by watching againſt the ſecret riſings of his inward corruptions, with all the ſubtle inſinuations of Satan, ſo as at all times, and upon all occaſions, as well as in his more direct addreſſes to God, he is put to watch and ward, to fence and fight, and all little enough to prevent the aſſaults of his enemies, and preſerve himſelf from the infection of ſin. Oh! What a difficulty is there in gathering up a mans thoughts and affections in duty, and keeping a ſtrait hand upon them all the while? To abandon vanity in diſcourſe, and in our own hearts, to curb, and keep in, what will be ready to break out, yea, and to nipp the early buddings of corruption, e're they grow, and get head, is work that will require labour, and care, and pains. So is it alſo, to have our converſation alwayes in Heaven, by ſetting our affections on things above, continually muſing and meditating on Eternity, and that happineſs which never ſhall have end; with minding alwayes what may ſerve for the accompliſhment of our deſires, in the enjoyment of God, and watching againſt all hindrances from the World, the fleſh, and the Devil, that may obſtruct our paſſage, whiles we are here in our pilgrimage. Tis no eaſie matter to deny our ſelves, in the

desires of the flesh, specially, when we see the most to use a liberty, with a fair pretence of conveniency, and necessary accommodation. 'Tis hard to keep a bridle on our lips, and much harder to keep it on our hearts. And what ado must there be, to observe and try our wayes, so as all may be according to Rule; and what diligence also is required, in calling our selves to an account every day, so as to clear up our Evidences, that there may be nothing to interrupt a fair and free correspondency between God and our Souls? Now this harder part of Christianity many curtall, yea, cut it off, and cast it quite away, never caring for it, so much as seriously to have any thoughts about it; and content themselves with an outside carkass (as I may call it) of the true Religion, that hath nothing of life or Soul in it. However, they will one day find, that this easie and empty formality of bodily exercise, will be a swift witness against them, that they might have done better, if they would.

Arg. 12. TO say no more in way of Argument, Let it be consider'd, What many, yea most are wont to do, when they are in apparent hazards of death, or in any deadly dangers. Do they not then, as the Mariners, cry every man to his God? Then men are affected mostly one of these two wayes: Either they cry out lamentably, yea, even howl for vexation of Spirit bewailing their loss of precious time, and their mis-spending those Talents, which might

Jon. 1. 4, 5. Psa. 107. 28.

might have been employed for their Souls advantage: Or they lye as men ſtruck in the head, and their heart (as *Nabals*) dyes within them, ſo as they become as ſtones or ſtocks, that have no ſenſe. Now what doth this ſignifie? Even that, which I have been diſcourſing hitherto. So long as men have eaſe and health, youth and ſtrength, and feel no evils or troubles, their luſts are lively, and alwayes kindling into a flame; and hence there's alwayes a miſt of ſmoke and darkneſs in their Souls, ſuch as hides and overwhelms all the notions they have of God, or any thing that's good, ſo as they never conſider, what ſhall be the end of their madd mirth, ſinfull vanities, or horrid impieties. But the ſenſe of approaching Death quenches all the flame of their luſts, and when the ſmoke of that fire is once diſpell'd, their natural principles, or any other light they have had, appear again to act, as they would have done before, had they not been ſuppreſs'd, and as it were buried under the rubbiſh of fleſhly and filthy luſts.

To this purpoſe we may obſerve, what the Pſalmiſt hath, *Pſal.* 9. 20. *Put them in fear, O Lord, that the Nations may know themſelves to be but men.* They were intollerably inſolent and outragious, taking no notice of God, not caring for him, ſo long as they had their wills, and felt no troubles. Hence the Pſalmiſt prayes God, to put them in fear, *i. e.* to bring upon them ſome horrible tempeſt of his wrath, and to give a proof of his power in ſome remarkable judgement, that ſo they might come to themſelves. I have cited this Text only to ſhew, That *David*

was of this mind, That men will quake and tremble at the ſenſe of Gods Judgements, which they would not before, ſo long as they feared no danger. And why? Becauſe in times of proſperity, the ſmoke of mens luſts ſmothers the operation of all their principles, ſo as they can have no effect. But Death hath a gaſtly look, becauſe it is a fore-runner of Judgement, and men are appal'd at the very thoughts of it, putting them off ſo long as poſſibly they can. However at laſt it comes, and then, when there's no longer help nor hope, Oh no ſuch welcome Viſitants as good people, nothing ſo deſirable as their prayers. They do not then rejoyce, and boaſt themſelves in their wickedneſs. No, They are ſorry for their ſins, and wiſh they had led their lives in wayes of godlineſs, truth and righteouſneſs. Queſtionleſs they are then tamer, and may be talk'd withall; at leaſt the moſt of them. For now their eyes are opened, to ſee, what before they would not, but might have ſeen if they would. And is not this a cogent Argument, to convince ungodly Sinners, that they wittingly and willingly ſtifled the Light that ſhin'd in them, to ſhew them the only way to reſt and peace. Who then ſhall bear the blame, but themſelves? This one Evidence, if there were no more, is enough to give the Verdict for God, againſt all ungodly men.

I hope now enough hath been ſaid, to prove the general Propoſition, laid down in the beginning, ſo as I may now proceed to make ſome Application of the whole.

But

But there's one Objection more, that muſt be removed, and it is this, or to this purpoſe, *Vizt.*

Obj. That I have diſcours'd a great deal, to prove men guilty of their own deſtruction, by ſhewing, that they goe againſt their own Light and Conſciences, and ſo condemn themſelves in what they do. But I have not all this while ſhewed them, how to find that good and right way, which leadeth unto life. This had need be done, and never more, than in theſe, and the late times. *You tell us* (will ſome ſay) *a great deal of our wilfullneſs and frowardneſs, in going againſt our light. But can you tell, What light ſhall lead us, in ſo many perplexities of Opinions, when every one calls us to his way, and none of them knows how to aſſure us, which is the good, and the right way? You ſeem to make but one right way, and how ſhall we know where it lyeth, when there are ſo many Wayes cryed up, and every one is pretended to be the only good way? We have need of a clue to lead us out of ſuch a labyrinth, for elſe 'tis impoſſible for us to find our way.*

Sol. This is indeed a Queſtion worth the anſwering, and 'twill not be much beſide my deſign, to ſay ſomewhat about it.

For the many various and different perſwaſions of men, in matters of Religion, are enough to ſtumble thoſe, who will be glad of any occaſion, to quarrel the way of their own Salvation. And for their ſakes, I ſhall ſay, what I am able, to give them ſatisfaction, if it may be.

That there are many and different perſwaſions of men, about the matters of God, is that

which cannot be denied. But that those different perſwaſions ought to hinder our enquiries, or are a ſufficient excuſe for our careleſsneſs, about the concernments of our Souls, I deny, and for my denial I give theſe following Reaſons.

First, If ſuch differences were a ground ſufficient to excuſe us, then all that went Heavens-way, ſince the beginning of the World almoſt, might plead it, as well as we. For what age or time can be ſhewed, when it was otherwiſe? Differences of Religion are indeed ſad, but they are no new things. *Adam*'s children were ſoon divided about Religion, or elſe we had not read
Gen. 6. 2. of *the Sons of God, and the Daughters of men*, ſo early in the World. 'Tis plain, they all then profeſs'd not one way, or if they did, they were
Ibid. farr divided in their practices. As *Noah walked with God, when all fleſh had corrupted his way.* And after the Flood, were they not divided in their Religions, as much as in their Languages? Who ſo reads the Story recorded in *Geneſis*, may ſee the World was peopled with thoſe, that ſerv'd ſome one God, and ſome another; and few were they that ſerv'd the living and true God, in a right manner, and yet ſome ſuch there were in all ages. How was *Iſrael* divided, about the way of worſhipping God, after the rent made by *Jeroboam*? And not to be tedious in Inſtances, How many Sects were there in Chriſts time, and before? Yea, and preſently after the Goſpel was publiſhed, how did Sects ariſe and ſwarm in every corner of the World? And how it hath been ever ſince, they muſt be very ignorant,

rant, that do not know. But what of all this? God had his faithful Servants, that followed him in the good old way of truth and holineſs, in all thoſe times; and we never read or hear of any complaints they made, That there were ſo many opinions and perſwaſions, as they could not tell which to follow. No, they did, as all others ought to do, apply themſelves to ſearch and enquire what way God had preſcribed, and ſeeking it in ſincerity, with all their hearts, they found out that way, wherein they found reſt to their Souls. For this purpoſe, obſerve the reſolution of Gods people, as you have it, *Micah* 4. 5. Though other people pleaſed themſelves in their ſuperſtitions, and oppoſed themſelves againſt them, yet they reſolved to ſtick faſt to the wayes of God in his Word. *God indeed ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own wayes*, before Chriſts coming in the fleſh, otherwiſe than afterwards, in that Goſpel-grace was not publiſhed throughout the World equally and indifferently to the *Gentiles*, as to the *Jews*. And God hath ſince ſuffered men to ariſe in the Chriſtian Church, and teach perverſe things, and ſo there have grown many Sects and Parties in matters of Religion, very different and contrary. But God never left men without light, to diſcern of things that differ, and to deſcry the good, and the right way, if they had pleas'd to make uſe of it. The Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *There muſt be Hereſies, or Sects*, and gives a good reaſon for it, as our Saviour ſaith, *It muſt needs be, that offences come*, *Mat.* 18. 7. Yet no man hath any cauſe to complain, and ſay, We cannot ſee

Act. 14. 16.

which is the right way, becauſe of thoſe Hereſies and Offences. God by them puts us to uſe our beſt skill and endeavours, for finding out the good, and the right way; and by thoſe differences makes appear, who are ſincere and ſound at heart. For ſuch there were, notwithſtanding thoſe differences, and ſuch there are, and will be to the Worlds end. Hence nothing can be ſpoken more frivolous, than to ſay, There are ſo many Religions, a man cannot tell which to chuſe. It is all one, as for a man to ſay, There are ſo many lanes and turnings in his way to ſuch a place, as he will never think of going thither, though his whole Eſtate be in hazard, and no way to help it, but by ſuch a journey. What do men, when they are bound to travel, but reſolve to goe on, and make the beſt enquiry they can to find out the way? And ſo ſhould we in this caſe; and to be otherwiſe minded, is a very madneſs.

2dly. The way to Heaven is not ſo hard to be found, if we had hearts reſolved to walk in it. There's a great fallacy in the Argument, which had need be diſcovered. For in truth, men deceive themſelves by it, whiles they conſider not, that their hearts are naturally at enmity with God, and his wayes; and becauſe they have no mind to goe where God commands and ſends them, they frame an excuſe, and pretend there are ſo many wayes, as 'tis impoſſible to find the right. And to ſpeak as it is, this is all the cauſe, and here lies all the fault. If men were willing to goe in Gods wayes, they would never complain

plain so much, of the difficulty in finding them. 'Tis an easie matter to find an excuse, when a man wants a good will to any thing, whatever it be. *A Lion is in all wayes, where the slothful man is to goe.* Pro. 26. 13.

3 *dly.* And for this purpose consider farther, That the way to Heaven must be discern'd and discover'd, by that which is the proper mark and character of it, as we find it in Scripture. Now, in the matters of Gods Kingdom, some are more essential, substantial, and of greater consequence, than others; so as they who differ about some particulars, may yet be right in the main, and all in Heavens way. 'Twere sad, indeed, if every difference in a punctilio, should make another way to Heaven. Where are there two men in all the World, that are of one mind in every thing? God forbid, that among the different perswasions that are about some things, in the way of administring Christs Ordinances, we should allow of none to be in the way to Heaven, that is otherwise minded in some Particulars, than we our selves are. There are many roads to a great City, and yet they that goe the one, or the other, come alike to it, because all those several wayes have a tendency towards it. All the question is, and must be, Whether the way we take, be such, as hath a tendency towards Heaven? And by the way, I think it the great mistake of some, to value men mostly, according as they are affected to their own private way, whatever it be; whereas the valuation ought to be according to what men are in the

main

main and great matters of Godlineſs, *viz.* Faith, Hope, Love, and all the fruits of them, Righteouſneſs, Mercy, *&c. For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of men*, Ro. 14. 18. There are ſome Foundation-truths of the Goſpel, wherein to miſtake deliberately and conſtantly, is of deſperate conſequence. And there are the great matters of the Law, wherein a willful conſtant neglect is inconſiſtent with true Holineſs. Yea, though the errour or evil be in it ſelf none of the greateſt, yet when there is a perſiſting in them, after conviction, and againſt admonition, out of malignancy, I know not what to reſolve better, than that the way of ſuch men is not ſafe. But when there is an unfeigned deſire, and an earneſt endeavour, to know the good and right way, and a conſtant courſe in the practice of all ſervices and duties to God and men, with a conſcionable careſulneſs to avoid offence towards all, I know no reaſon, why ſuch, though under different perſwaſions, in ſome Particulars of no great concernment, ſhould be otherwiſe looked on, than as the Children of our Father in Heaven.

Therefore, as for the different perſwaſions of ſo many divided about ſome things, for want of light, they need be no occaſion of ſtumbling to any. The way to Heaven is eaſie to be ſeen, notwithſtanding thoſe differences. For whoever they be among thoſe Parties, that, in obedience to Chriſt, have learn'd to deny themſelves, and all ungodlineſs, *&c.* and to take up Chriſts Croſs, and to live in the conſtant exercise of mortifica-

tion,

tion, and crucifying the flesh, and do indeed lead their lives, in the main, according to the only rule of righteousness, they are in Heavens way. Thou, it may be, dost not like the perswasions of some of them: And I say, If thou lik'st them not, for me thou mayest let them alone. But thou perhaps likest not Holiness, Self-denial, and crucifying of thy Lusts neither, but art resolved to take thy full swinge in the pleasures of sin, and thy daily practice is, to serve thy fleshly desires to the utmost. Thou art (may be) a Drunkard, a common Swearer, an unclean Beast, living, lying down, and wallowing in the mire. Now to thee, I say, Whosoever be in Heavens way, (to be sure) thou art out of it. And thou must certainly resolve, to change thy way, or perish for ever. Thou sayest, There are so many Religions, a man cannot tell which to chuse. But in the mean time, thou art of no Religion, thou hast not so much as a form and face of it. Set aside thy going to Church on *Sundayes*, (with what mind, thou thy self best knowest) what is there of Religion to be seen in thee? In thy Family, there is no shew of it, in Prayer, and Praise, and reading the Scripture, and Catechizing thy Children and Servants. There is to be seen all the Week, labouring for the food that perisheth, by early rising, and late going to bed. There a man may hear Oaths, and Curses, and Lyes, and filthy Communication, and the best but vain and idle discourses, but not a savory word, to shew any sense of God, and his goodness, from morning to night. There's Provision for the necessities

of

of Nature, to cloath the back, and fill the belly; and Proviſion too for the fleſh, to fullfil the luſts thereof: But there's nothing of God and Godlineſs to be ſeen, no conſcience made of ſin to ſhun it, or of any thing that's good to practice it. Now, whoever thou art, that leadeſt ſuch a life, I tell thee, Whatever becomes of others, it cannot be well with thee in theſe wayes of ungodlineſs. Thou vain fooliſh man, thinkeſt thou, that any Religion can be worſe than thine? Thou haſt none at all, no not ſo much as a ſhew of it. Even *Turks* and *Pagans* may be, and ſome of them are, ſober, temperate, juſt, and honeſt in their doings and dealings with others, which thou art not. Wherefore, let there be never ſo many Religions, I'le rather chuſe the worſt of them, than to do as thou doſt. And this I aſſure thee, Whatever becomes of thoſe many Sects and Parties, thou art in a ſad condition, and hadſt need think of changing it, as ſoon as thou canſt. And if thou ask, Which way thou ſhalt take among ſo many, I anſwer thus, That I will not perſwade thee any way, but what (I am ſure) is right, *viz.* To be honeſt and godly, and to forſake thoſe wayes, wherein, whoever walks, ſhall never find reſt. *To follow peace and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* To repent of all thy ungodly courſes, and wayes of wickedneſs, whether open or ſecret. To walk circumſpectly, and make ſtraight ſteps to thy feet. To be holy and unblameable in all converſation, and to make conſcience of every duty, according to the rule of the Word. And this thou mayeſt do, without much adoe

Heb. 12. 14.

or

or diſpute, except it be with thine own wicked heart.

For thoſe many Parties that are, I am bold to tell them all, and every one of them, That they will find no comfort one day, in being of this ſide, or that, if they be not found in wayes of righteouſneſs and holineſs. And theſe are the wayes I would have thee take, and theſe thou mayeſt ſoon learn from Scripture, where they are ſo plain, as a man may run, and read them. But one thing I muſt mind thee of again, *viz.* That thou who ſo quarrell'ſt at the many Religions abroad, haſt perhaps a quarrel in thy heart againſt God and Godlineſs, and thou canſt not endure any Religion ſo, as to be tyed to any Rule or Law, more than thine own Luſts. Thou loveſt to live at eaſe and pleaſure, and likeſt no Religion, but ſuch a one, as will give thee leave to be licentious. To thee I ſay again, dipp and chuſe, thou canſt never change thy Religion for a worſe. And to change it, thou haſt need, as ſoon as may be: For 'twill be ſad with thee, to dye in ſuch a Religion, which is indeed none at all, or good for nothing. Do not thou look, how many Religions and Opinions there are, for that's nothing to thee: But look to thy converſation, and ſee, whether that be ſuch as becomes a Chriſtian. Do thou love Chriſt, and fear to ſin, as much as any of all thoſe different perſwaſions; and ſhew thy ſelf as humble, as honeſt, as upright, as conſcionable, and every way as carefull to pleaſe God, as any of them all, and then thou doſt well indeed. Alas! poor Soul, what will it avail thee, to ſay, There are ſo many

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Religions, thou knoweſt not which to take, ſo long as thou art reſolved to walk in wayes of ungodlineſs, and to ſerve divers luſts and pleaſures, and deny thy ſelf in nothing, that will ſerve to pleaſe the fleſh. This, to be ſure, is not Heavens-way, whatever it be. And therefore make no more queſtion, about the many Religions, that are in the World, till thou art better reſolved for that Religion, which is plain and eaſie enough to be learn'd by any, that hath not a wicked heart againſt God, and all that is good. Reſolve once to ſerve Sin no more, and thou wilt preſently ſee the way to Heaven, as plain before thee, as thou knoweſt the way to thine own houſe or home.

AND now I ſhall make ſome Application of all that hath been ſaid, after I have given one Proviſo, to prevent a miſtake that may be. I have hitherto ſhewed, How willful the wicked World is, and how apt to take offence, even to contend with God himſelf, about the wayes and workings of his Grace and Providence. Say and do what you can or will, they will not be perſwaded, but perhaps the more hardned. But though it be ſo with moſt of the World, yet beware, whatever you do, you give them no occaſion of falling or ſtumbling. Say not in thine heart, *They will ſuch as will periſh, and it matters not, how we carry our ſelves towards them; if they will be offended, let them be offended, we cannot help it.* Some, yea too many, will be offended,

fended; yet take heed of giving them the leaſt occaſion of offence: For ſo hath the Lord commanded, *Levit.* 19. 14. *Thou ſhalt not put a ſtumbling-block before the blind, but ſhalt fear thy God.* Yea, *Deut.* 27. 18. *There is a curſe upon him, that maketh the blind to wander out of the way.* And our Saviour *denounceth a woe to him, by whom the offence cometh,* Mat. 18. 7. They are blind, and out of the way; but in that, they deſerve the rather, to be the object of thy pity, and prayers, and endeavours, to turn them from the errour of their way. What knoweſt thou, that they may not recover themſelves, and come to repentance? *Secret things belong to the Lord, Deut.* 29. 29. That we are to labour their repentance, and by all poſſible means to endeavour it, in our capacities and relations, is revealed to us as our duty; and if they will periſh notwithſtanding, we have delivered our own Souls, their blood will be upon their own heads. Our Saviour indeed ſaid of ſome, *Let them alone,* &c. *Mat.* 15. 14. *i. e.* Have no regard to them, trouble not your ſelves about them, if they be offended, be not you offended however, becauſe of them. But he allows not his Diſciples to offend them in the leaſt. If men ſhew themſelves contentious, malicious, and wilfully contumacious, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, ſome of them were, Let them alone, paſs them by, but yet provoke them not to be more wicked than they are. True, we cannot do, what is our duty, but ſome will be offended, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were at Chriſt, for doing the will of him that ſent him. But the offence

was

was only taken by them, there was none given by him. He prov'd to be by accident a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, but never offended any. If we cannot do, what is our duty, without offence to ſome, the fault is theirs, not ours, becauſe we may not, to pleaſe them, offend God, by diſobeying his commands. Some will be offended, if we will not pledge them in a drunken health: Let them be offended, it need not trouble us. If we tamely do, as they do, we encourage them in their debaucheries, and ſo we offend them indeed, by helping them on towards the pit of deſtruction. Wicked men make too much haſt to the Devil, we need not provoke, or put them forward. Indeed we have need be very careful, and as the Apoſtle, *Jude v.* 22. adviſeth, *To put a difference.* Some perhaps will rage, if we we will not run to the ſame exceſs of riot with them: But better they rage, than we, by doing what they would have us, to provoke Gods wrath againſt our own Souls. A patient forbearance to do, as they do, and a with-drawing from them, may be an effectual reproof, and work upon them afterwards. If there be no hope to faſten an admonition, *Solomon* hath reſolv'd the caſe for us, *Pro.* 9. 8. *Reprove not a Scorner.* However comply not with him, to allow of his wickedneſs in the leaſt. But be ſure, not to give any occaſion of falling to ſuch as are weak, *Leſt thy poor Brother periſh, for whom Chriſt dy'd* Ro. 14. 15. The Apoſtle was a ſingular precedent for this, *He would eat no fleſh whiles he lived, rather than offend his Brother,* 1 *Cor.* 8. *fin.* How did he yield upon occaſion,

to

to avoid offence to the weak? But as farr as I can remember, not otherwise. He yielded in those things, wherein he was fully satisfied in his own conscience and judgement. But how, and upon what terms? Never (as I remember) but to prevent the offence, that might be taken by weak Brethren; lest they might take occasion, by his not yielding in some things, to cast off all, and turn back again with the Dogg to his vomit. We do not read of his so yielding to wicked willful Sinners, that would have made no other use of it, than to reproach him, and (which is worse) the Gospel too, by saying, He was a man of no Principles, that would comply with any thing, to save his skin. We have a notable Instance for this in *Galat.* 2. 3, 4, 5. *When false Brethren went about to infringe the liberty of Christians, and bring them into bondage, he gave no place by subjection, no not for an hour.* For therein he had built again the things that he had destroyed, and encouraged the enemies of the truth in their opposition against it. Yield to any thing thou canst, to save a Soul, to draw men on to a good liking of Gods wayes, and putting them forward in them: But not one hairs breadth, to encourage them in their ungodliness; For that's offending them, contrary to the command of Christ.

And now I must call loud upon many, and even conjure them, to consider their ways, yes, whereby they have given so great occasion of offence, to such as are openly and avowedly wicked. O! Do not say, or think, *Such wicked men shew themselves, what they are; when*

they declare their ſin as Sodom, *they are paſt ſhame, and paſt hope; Let them dye, and be damn'd, who can help it?* It may prove ſo, that they will dye, and be damn'd, and nor thou, nor any man elſe can help it, becauſe they will not help themſelves. But thou haſt need look to it, that their death and condemnation add nothing to thine account. They periſh for their contempt or neglect of that, which they ſhould more carefully have look'd after: But what if your careleſs and looſe walking, have been the occaſion of making them to think, they need not be ſo carefull; yea, perhaps, of ſlighting and ſetting at nought all the wayes of Gods Commandments? Surely, if it be ſo, the beſt that can be made or ſaid of it, is this, That they are Principals, and you are Acceſſaries, as to their deſtruction; and what comfort you can take in that, I beſeech you ſeriouſly to conſider. For be you well aſſured, that the ungodly lives of profeſſed Chriſtians, will one day be aggravated by this, that when they lived (as many thouſands now do) amongſt profeſſed Infidels, they gave them occaſion to have hard thoughts of Chriſt and Chriſtianity, and to reſolve, they would never goe to that Heaven, where Chriſtians hope to come. For how ſhall ſuch poor Souls be brought to enquire after God, when they that profeſs themſelves to be his ſervants walk ordinarily in wayes of uncleanneſs, exceſs and deceit, &c. ſuch as Heathens know by Natures light, to be againſt the mind of God? The Devil himſelf, (whom thoſe *Barbarians* ſerve) can teach them no worſe, than what they

they are learn'd by the evil converſations and examples of Chriſtians. How ſhall they be turned from the power of Satan unto God, when they cannot ſee it will be for the better, but rather for the worſe? Here I cannot omit, what the *Turks* are wont to ſay, when another will not believe them, *What doſt take me for a Chriſtian?* It ſeems they have obſerved too much falſhood amongſt Chriſtians. Now this is a Lamentation, and let it be a Lamentation, that the mouths of Infidels are ſo much opened againſt all Chriſtians, and the mouths alſo of many profeſſed Chriſtians againſt more eminent Profeſſors, to blaſpheme, and ſay, *Are theſe the wayes and doings of thoſe that ſerve Chriſt? Are theſe practices becoming them, that pretend ſo much to Godlineſs, and would be thought more excellent than their Neighbours?* What inference (think you) will Infidels, and ungodly prophane men make from it? Surely this, and no other, *Let them goe alone for us, we are as well where we are already, we are not like to mend our ſelves, by taking the courſes and wayes of theſe Chriſtians, theſe great Profeſſors; nor can we be worſe in the way wherein we now are; If they be not in all, as we are, they are certainly in ſome things as bad as we can be.* And now I could *extempore*, and without any ſtudy, draw up a black bed-roll of many and manifold groſs miſcarriages of many, that would be thought more eminent Chriſtians than their Neighbours: but I ſhall content my ſelf with this general Admoniſtion, in hope it may be improved to the right end of it, by ſuch as cannot but know themſelves

faulty in many particulars, unleſs the God of this World hath quite blinded the eyes of their minds. O that theſe men would conſider as they ſhould, what to anſwer in the great day of account! Specially when it cannot be denied, that ſuch horrid things have been done, as Natures light (if there were no other evidence) cannot but condemn. I ſhall only add, They have been ſuch, as whoſoever (that is but civil and ſober) hears, his ears cannot but tingle at the very report of them.

The Application.

IF all the ground and reaſon of all miſtakes and miſcarriages about the matters of Gods Kingdom, and our Salvation, be our contempt or neglect of the means and helps which God hath allowed us, Let every one by himſelf, make a ſerious enquiry, how he ſhall be able to clear himſelf in the great day of account. For God will certainly come, and judge, and try every mans work, and reward accordingly.

And in this Application of the foregoing Diſcourſe, I ſhall apply my ſelf to all, and every one, that hath but ſo much of Religion, as to acknowledge, That there is a World to come, after a little time ſpent here on Earth, and that men ſhall be rewarded hereafter for ever, according to their preſent behaviour.

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This is no more of Religion, than all, or moſt of Heathens ever had, and ſtill have; though their conceptions about it, have been, and ſtill are, but confuſed, general, imperfect notions, without any effect conſiderable. But yet, the main intent of all, ſhall be with a more eſpecial reſpect to ſuch as do, or might know more clearly, the *things of their peace, than Heathens can.* To theſe I ſay, They cannot but know, that all who have lived ſince the World began, and ſhall live till it have an end, ſhall not be for ever as they were here on Earth. And this our Saviour ſhews plainly in the Parable (as I take it to be) of the Rich man and *Lazarus*, *Luc.* 16. *v.* 19. — 31. Some receive their good things here, and ſome muſt wait for them till hereafter. And a great turn there will be, ſo as the Scene ſhall be quite changed, as you may ſee *v.* 25. of *Luc.* 16. *For* Lazarus *is comforted, and the Rich man is tormented.*

Now conſider what hath been diſcourſed before, and ſee whither you are a going, and where you make account to arrive at laſt. There is, by your own confeſſion, an happy eſtate and condition for ſome in glory, and honour, and immortality. And by what hath been ſaid before, you may ſee (if you will) that nor you, nor any others, lye under any fatal neceſſity of periſhing in your ſins; but that if you dye, and be damn'd, it is only through your own [illegible]. Now be intreated, whiles it is [illegible] to conſider your wayes, and bethink your ſelves, how thoſe bleſſed Souls, that have all their deſires and hopes accompliſhed in the ſight

of God for ever, came to the enjoyment of their happineſs. Was it not in the way of Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Did they know by immediate and extraordinary Revelation, before they repented and believed, that they were of the number that ſhould be ſaved? Or was the Book of Life opened to them, that they might read their own names there recorded, and ſo be encouraged to repent, and turn to God? You cannot, when you are awake, imagine it; or if you ſhould, it is but as a ſick mans dream, that never entred into the head of one that's ſober, and in his right ſenſes. Alas! Thoſe now bleſſed Souls

Tit. 3. 3. were once (while upon earth) *Fooliſh and diſobedient, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures. They*

Eph. 2. 3. *were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* They were of themſelves inclin'd to the things of this World, and traded and traffiqu'd for them, as others do, till afterwards they came to know better. Yea, all that died in the faith, before God was manifeſted in the fleſh, and never had the diſcoveries of ſaving grace ſuch as have been ſince, even they by dimmer light choſe the way to that place, where they ſhall be for ever with the Lord. And who among us now, would not deſire to be with thoſe Patriarchs, and Prophets, and other holy men of God before and ſince the coming of Chriſt? [illegible] conſider well, whether we take the ſame [illegible] took. Read the Eleventh Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, and ſee what ſo many Worthies of old did and ſuffered, and ſo by faith and patience inherited the promiſes.

miſes. They ſtood not arguing and whartling, as many now do, putting queſtions, and framing exceptions, to excuſe themſelves from neceſſary duties, and to gain a little allowance to their fleſhly deſires. They were not frighted out of Gods way, by Bugg-bears of their own fancies, no nor by reall fears and expectations of the greateſt hazards. You never read in Scripture, that they made Queries about Gods Decrees; or reſolved, as ſome do, that if they were elected, they ſhould be ſaved however; or that, if Chriſt died not for them, there was no hope. You never read, that any of thoſe, who are now in Heaven, reaſoned thus, That they could do nothing of themſelves, and therefore would ſit ſtill, and faſhion themſelves to this World, becauſe if God had any grace or mercy in ſtore for them, they ſhould be ſure to have it in his time, though they never ſought after it. Did any of them do thus, and let all the care of their Salvation lie ſomewhere elſe, without ever looking after it? Where do you read theſe things, or who told you ſo, that others may learn and know as much as you? I have read much of their faith and patience, and patient continuance in well-doing; and how by theſe they poſſeſſed the Kingdom, prepared for them, through the grace of him that is Heir of all things. But amongſt them all, I read not of one, that took the courſe, that ſo many do now [illegible]. They were all of them humble [illegible] live in all things to the wills of God; [illegible] reſolv'd to walk with God, in the midſt of all the ungodly ones amongſt whom they liv'd. They denied

themſelves, many of them, to the very death, and took joyfully the ſpoyling of their goods, and would not renounce the wayes of God, for all that a wicked World could do unto them, or lay upon them. This (I ſay) this was the way, wherein they went to Heaven; and they that know of any other way thither, than that of Self-denial, and crucifying the fleſh, with the affections and luſts, have made a diſcovery, ſuch as none, who are now in Heaven, could make before them. What remains then, but that we tread in their ſteps, do and ſuffer as they did, if we are call'd to it, and ſo wait for our happineſs, and try, if we fare not as well as others that went before us. 'Tis ſad to think, how moſt men fool themſelves out of all their hopes, by their dallying about their greateſt and only concernments, and flatter themſelves to their deſtruction, by conceits and fancies of their own framing. The way to Heaven is now as open, as ever it ſhall be, till Chriſts coming again; and the Doctrine of our Salvation, as much cleared up, in all particulars, as nothing can ſtumble us, if we will but lay aſide our peeviſh and froward humours. Were we but once reſolved to deny our ſelves, and to follow Chriſt where-ever he goes before us, whatever the way be, fair or foul, the work is done, we need make no other queſtion: There's as good ſecurity, as can be given, and we may ſafely build [illegible]

But [illegible] not ſo with us, as it was with the Saints, who are now in Heaven. We ſtand bleſſing our ſelves in our own way, be it never ſo bad;

bad; and think we do well in all we do, though all Scripture and Reason be against it. This is the trade that Sinners drive, as the Devil would have them, and their own hearts incline and carry them. The Devil (you must know) ever since he undid himself, hath made it his business to undoe all the World of mankind, as much as in him lieth. And he is now as hard at work as ever he was, and drives as great a trade, for gaining Souls to himself, as ever he did. And what is his way, to cheat the World, and gull men of all they have, worth saving or losing? Truly, the very same, or very like to that, which I have before discoursed. He cannot by all the arts and methods he useth, heighten mens sinfull corruption to the same degree of malice and madness against God, that himself is guilty of. But yet he hath a way that serves his turn, to bring men into the same place of torment with himself for ever. And what way is it? It is even this, and no other, *viz.* To keep men in a perswasion, that their way is good, and that they have no such enmity in their hearts against God, as some charge them with, but that they love him, and all his Commandments truly, and do the best they can, to chuse the best way to their everlasting happiness. And these conceits are strong in those that have them, so as it is no easie matter to convince them of the contrary. These they nourish and cherish, even when they are in wayes of all ungodliness, running headlong to their own destruction.

Now my desire is, to reason the case a little further with these men, and try, if God may be

be pleased to give them Repentance, that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil.

1. And First, I ask them, If *Turks*, and Infidel-*Jews*, are not as much perswaded, that their several respective wayes are good, yea, and better than any other? Yea, do not all men, of what Sort and Sect soever, though never so vile, and vicious, and barbarous, perswade themselves, that their way is good? Can you light on Man, Woman, or Child, that will not say, They hope to be saved; and the way they take (whatever it be) is, as they think, the ready way to Heaven? Nay, if you tell them, they are in the broad way towards Hell, will they not be ready to flie in your face, and say, You do them wrong? Yet no sober man will say, That all and every one of these is in the right, but many of them (whoever they be) are quite beside the way to Heaven.

2. I ask, If any of all those Persons and Parties (which are numerous and various) do not so farr allow of their own respective wayes, as to abhorr the different wayes that others take, and count them accursed of God for abusing themselves in their mistaken wayes, as to undoe their Souls for ever? Do not *Turks* and *Jews* condemn all Christians to the Pit of Hell? And I know but few others, that are better minded towards all, that are out of their own way. Papists say [illegible] there's no Salvation for any out of their Church. And the vilest of men amongst us, spare not to pass sentence upon others, that dare not be so vile as themselves.

Now

Now when God shall come to judge all, will he (think you) allow of every plea, that shall be made by every one of these, and say, Well done, You are all my faithfull Servants? Will he commend and reward all, according as they all perswaded themselves, that their way was good? No certainly, he will not so acquit the wicked World, that condemn all besides themselves, and their followers. Nor will he count, that every man hath a right to eternal life, of what Religion soever he is, (as some have dream'd) because he seem'd to mean well in it. The Lord hath shewed all men, what is good, and what he requireth of them, and that so fully and plainly, as he will have ground enough to proceed against them, and to execute vengeance on all Idolaters, and all other ungodly and unrighteous men, whatsoever Religion they professed. He will easily and suddenly find out all, that have enquir'd and sought after the only true way of worship, which himself had appointed, and have made conscience of walking before him in holiness and righteousness, with an utter abhorring of all false wayes. And to these only will he say, Well done, good and faithfull Servants, You, and you only, have done as I commanded you.

If any shall say, That an allowance must be given to some, because all that goe in the good way, walk not at one rate, but some come behind and faultrer sometimes; I say so too, and that the righteous God will put a [illegible] between those that are upright in the main, though falling behind others in degrees of true grace, & others, that wilfully chuse their own wayes, which God hath

hath expreſly forbidden, and as wilfully refus'd the good old way of Gods Commandments. He knows, and will own all, that have denied themſelves, and made it their work to find and keep the way of God. There are, and alwayes have been ſuch in the World, (though a few in compariſon) that knew the ſtreight way to Heaven, amongſt all the crooked wayes of mens deviſing, and ſet themſelves to keep that way, notwithſtanding all oppoſition or temptation. And theſe only will God look after in the great day of account. For others, he will have enough to anſwer them, though they were of never ſo many and different perſwaſions, in point of Religion, they muſt be all pack'd together in that day, and bound in bundles, to be caſt into the fire, becauſe they were all in their life time, Workers of iniquity. They ſhall prevail little by pleading then. They could never ſee reaſon enough, to perſwade them out of the way that they took; For they ſhall be made to ſee in that day, there was a right and good way of holineſs and righteouſneſs, wherein they ſhould have walked, (and it was eaſie enough to be ſeen) but they would not walk therein. Nay, they found fault with it, and rais'd falſe reports of it, and us'd all the Arguments they could, to keep themſelves and others from walking in it. They would never ſtoop their high Spirits, to enter into the ſtrait gate, nor would they bear the contempt of the World, and the reproach that muſt be undergone for Chriſts ſake, and the Goſpels. They thought, to be religious, was to be melancholick; and thought it an hard bargain, to part

with

with the pleaſures of ſin, for ſomewhat (that ſome crack-brain'd people talk'd much of) in another World to be had, but no man knew when or where. They were ſuch, as would be merry while they might, and take as much of this World as they could; and for Religion, in reſpect to another World, they could never well underſtand it. There were indeed ſome, that talk'd much that way, but they could not well agree among themſelves, and therefore they left them to quarrel about it, and took the way that themſelves beſt liked. For the Religion which ſome cried up, as the only way to Heaven, they conceiv'd it very ſtrait and narrow; nor could they ſee ſo much in it, as might perſwade them to it. In a word, they never liked any Religion, that would tie them to deny all ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts. And hence it is eaſie to conceive, how God will proceed againſt all Sects and Sorts of men, of what perſwaſion ſoever, that never were perſwaded to deny themſelves for God, and the Goſpels ſake.

It ſhould be alſo conſidered, That, though all men have not Talents alike (as that may be granted) either for weight or number, yet all have enough, to ſhew them a better way, than what the moſt take, and that their way is not good before the Lord. Hence it will be clear, That there hath been a wilfull neglect of the truſt that was committed to them, and ſo without further evidence, the verdict muſt paſs againſt them. They all know (though not all alike) their Maſters will, and yet do it not, and therefore muſt be all beaten, though not with the

the ſame number or meaſure of ſtripes. This the Devil knows well enough, and that no plea (ſuch as men frame many to themſelves now) will then find place. And therefore, his work is to blind-fold men with ſuch conceits as were mention'd before, and ſo fill them with as many prejudices againſt God, and his wayes, as they can poſſibly hold, that when they are hood-wink'd, he may carry them whither he pleaſeth. Men are not eaſily (if poſſibly) brought to deſpite God as the Devil doth: Therefore they muſt be dealt with ſo, as to be perſwaded, there is ſome cauſe without them, and without any fault of theirs, which puts them upon thoſe vain and vile wayes and courſes wherein they walk. What thoſe pretences are, you have heard before, and I need not repeat them. Only I ſay, That ſo long as the Devil can hold men under ſuch miſtakes, and prejudices, or the like, he hath them faſt enough, and doth not fear an eſcape. Men, I ſay, will have excuſes for the worſt of their evil wayes, and this is one, and a great one, That the way they are in, is the beſt they can ſee; and they could never meet with any, that could ſhew them a better. They are willing enough to ſave their Souls, and have done as much as lieth in them for that end. They love God heartily, and abhorr, that any ſhould ſay, They hate his Commandments, which they labour to keep as well as they can. And all this ſerves to clear themſelves, and caſt all upon God: But he will not [illegible] that men caſt upon him; nor will he ſay in the great day of account, *Alas! poor Souls, you were willing enough to be ſaved,*

you

you loved me, and my wayes well enough, and would have walked in them, if I had tendred your Souls, as much as you your ſelves did. Will the Lord (think you) at that day, take upon himſelf all the blood of ſo many, as ſhall then be condemned to Hell for ever, and ſay, *If I had done for theſe, as I might, and ought to have done, they had never come into this place of torment?* Will the Lord ſay, *That he made men as he pleaſed, and then caſt them away, and left them to ſuffer ſhame and confuſion of face, for no fault of theirs, but only becauſe he had a mind to ſee his Creatures ſlain, and tormented before him for ever?* Will he ſay, *It was in his heart to damn them before they were born, and that for nothing, but becauſe it was his will and pleaſure? And that he ſent his Son into the World, to condemn the World, and not that the World through him might be ſaved?* Will he ſay indeed, *That he ſet men in ſuch a way, as they could not but periſh in it, and left them wholly depriv'd and deſtitute of all means and helps to ſave themſelves from wrath to come?* Conſider, I ſay, and bethink your ſelves before-hand, Whether the righteous God will take home all this to himſelf, and ſay, *It was he alone that hath been the cauſe of all the ruine and miſery that is come upon his Creatures*; and ſo quit them from any the leaſt blame of their deſtruction. Yet this is it, or very like it, that men would faſten upon God, if they knew how to do it. This is the tendency of all [illegible] diſputes about Gods Decrees and [illegible]ons of Grace and Providence. It is this, and no other, even to charge it on God, That if he had

pur-

purpoſed and provided better for them, it had never been ſo ſad with them, but they might have been happy and bleſſed for ever. But let God alone, and it will appear one day, where
Gen. 18. 25. the fault lieth. He is the Judge of all the Earth, and will not he do right? Yes, he will do right to all; and this the Apoſtle layeth down, as an unmoveable Principle, *Ro.* 3. 5, 6. *God is not unrighteous, who taketh vengeance. For then how ſhall God judge the World?* He will then acquit himſelf, and ſay for ever, *Theſe are the work of my hands, and I made them ſo, as they might have been happy for ever in communion with my ſelf. I allowed them means ſufficient for that end, but they caſt me off, and choſe ſomewhat elſe to be their only good; and though I have beſought and intreated them, again and again, with all poſſible earneſtneſs, and admoniſhed them of the danger of their own wayes, they would goe on however; and their frowardneſs and wilfullneſs in their own devices, againſt my expreſs command to the contrary, hath brought them to this, which they now ſee and feel, but would never believe till now. I have paſſed the ſentence of condemnation upon them, and it cannot be recall'd, nor can there be any reprieve or reſpite. But I have not done it without cauſe, and only for that I had a mind to ſee them lye for ever in torments and miſery. It was indeed my will to damn them, but I will'd their damnation only [illegible] cauſe they would not be reclaimed [illegible] not in their damnation, ſo as to condemn them, meerly for my will and pleaſure. I have only done juſtice upon incorrigible Offendors, ſuch as have deſpiſed my grace and*

mercy,

mercy, and the reward of these wicked ones is according to their works, yea as they would have it. For I fore warn'd them of it, as often and as earnestly as needed; and they would not beware; nor could any intreaties prevail, to turn them from those ungodly wayes, which led them to their destruction, as they knew.

Let men say now as they please, This is that which God will say, to justifie himself against all the World. And O! that men were wise, to consider it in time, and apply themselves to make their peace with God, which I assure them they may do, if they be not wanting to themselves.

And for their encouragement, I shall give them the best account I am able, how, and in what manner, God will proceed in the last and general Judgement. The way that he will take in that day, will be this, That every man shall be tried according to a known Law. 'Tis a gross mistake in men, to imagine, That God will judge the World according to that, which was never made known. The question will not be, Whether a man's Name were written in the Book of Life, but how he hath behaved himself, according to the Rule laid down in the Bible. That is more particularly and plainly thus, Whether, when Christ was offered to them, they accepted of him, and closed with him upon his own terms. For as they have answered the dispensations and overtures of his grace, so shall their doom be: If they counted all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of him; and valued nothing else in comparison, so they might

serve and honour him, whether by doing or suffering, in life or in death, *Peace, and Life, and Glory, and Immortality, will be their portion, and the lot of their inheritance for ever.* The Cause will for certain goe on their side, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. But if they have been contentious, and disobedient, and would not have the Lord Christ to reign over them, but would walk after their ungodly lusts, whatever could be said or done to reform them, there's a declared Law to condemn them; God will not, needs not look into any other Records about it.

Ro. 2. 7. Luc. 22. 28, 29.

Ro. 2, 8, 9. 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8.

Obj. If any say, That all shall not be judged by the Gospel;

Sol. I shall not contend, but only say, That all shall be condemned by a known Law, one or other. And if it be said further, *That as many as have sinned without Law, shall perish without Law:* I answer,

Ro. 2, 11, 12.

That the Apostle shews what he means in the 14th. Verse of the same Chapter: They that sin, and shall be condemned without Law, are the *Gentiles*, who had not the Law delivered to them (as the *Jews* had it) in writing: But yet they had the Law written in their hearts, and that will be plain enough, because it bare witness, and accused them, while they were in their sins. And this we may well infer from that place, That if there be a Law, that condemns men now in this World, by witnessing against their wickedness, much more will there be a Law found, for their condemnation, in the last day

day of account. Or this, That the same Law that condemns them now, will certainly condemn them then. And let that be observ'd also, That as Sin is the transgression of the Law, so Condemnation for Sin cannot be otherwise, than according to that Law. Once, it cannot be according to that which never was a Law; and that cannot be a Law, which was never declar'd to be a Rule of Life and Duty. Gods Decrees and Counsels are all righteous, but they were never made known to us, as a rule of moral actings. When God is pleased to declare his counsell by the event, we cannot without sin goe against it, and it is impossible for us to alter it. But still the rule we are to walk by, is the will of God, reveal'd for that end and purpose, that we may know what to do, in obedience to him who is our Soveraign Lord. And as we do, or do not, according to this will of God, so we are guilty or innocent before him. And good reason why it should be so, and not otherwise. For,

1. How can we be obedient to God in any thing, but that which we know to be his will? Obedience in the very notion of it, imports as much as hearing and understanding what the will of the Lord is. Nor will the righteous Lord of all, expect obedience to any will of his, we never heard of. Sure we are, that he never declared to the Sons of men any way of life, but in the two Covenants, *viz.* of Works before the Fall, and of Grace ever since. And though the means and manner of imparting to men the way of life, have been various; yet no man can, or could

could ever ſay, That God had conceal'd his mind from him, that he could not know, and ſo do it. We read, That there are Decrees and Counſels of God: But who knows, what they are, beſides God himſelf, till he is pleas'd to declare them, in the events of them? And thoſe events ſhew us only, what God will do, and not what we are to do.

2. We ſhew no Faith in God otherwiſe, than in obedience to his Commandments. This is the only way of *walking with God*, as Noah, *Gen.* 6. 9. When a man hath the Promiſe of God in his eye, and the Commands of God in his heart, and the encouragements he hath by the one, lays an obligation and engagement to the other. So did all thoſe Worthies, *Heb.* 11. who are recorded for example, to all that ſhall come after. The believing of the Promiſes, and obedience to the Commands of God, are the triall of men on Earth, and that by which they ſhall be tried hereafter. He that hath not Faith, cannot forgoe what is in hand, to purchaſe a reverſion of he knoweth not what. *Faith alone is the ground of things hoped for*, &c. *Heb.* 11. 1. And ſo it ſets a man on work to do and ſuffer the wills of God, becauſe it aſſures a man of Gods Faithfulneſs and All-ſufficiency. This obedience of Faith is that, which God rewards in his Servants, and nothing elſe. This is that which (as I may ſay) takes ſuch with God, when men can paſs by preſent enjoyments, only becauſe of his promiſe,

Heb. 6. 10. *Who cannot forget any work, or labour of love, which they have ſhewed unto his Name.*

3. A man ſhews no Love to God, in doing according to his decree and counſel, becauſe he cannot but do it, whether he will or no. Now God rewards no work, but the labour of love, when we delight to do his will, *Pſa.* 48. and deſire the knowledge of his wayes, as *David* did, *Pſa.* 119. that we may walk in them.

4. The Devil, and the worſt of wicked men, fullfil the counſels of God, in all they do, and cannot do otherwiſe. *Herod* and *Pilate*, *&c.* in crucifying Chriſt, did nothing, but what the hand and counſel of God had determined before, *Act.* 2. 23. *Act.* 4. 28. and yet it was their ſin, and their condemnation too. *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* is commended, *for a good man, and a juſt*, Luc. 23. 50, 51. *becauſe he conſented not to the counſel and deed of them*, who crucified Chriſt. The way of Gods Commandments, is the only way to life, and this the Devil and his followers cannot abide to walk in. For the way of his Counſels, they are alwayes in it, and cannot go beſides it, even when they do their worſt. And indeed, how ſhould they? unleſs we will ſuppoſe (what is not to be imagin'd) That God ſhould lay by all care, and looking after the affairs of the World, and leave them to be managed and ordered, as the Devil, and his Inſtruments will have them.

To ſay no more of this, God hath laid before us the way of Faith and [illegible] way of Truth and Holineſs, and commanded it, as the way that leadeth unto life; and in this way alone, can we find reſt unto our Souls.

Away therefore with all disputes and questions about Gods Decrees in this case, as being no rule for us to walk by: And look only, what God hath commanded, and be carefull about that, and you need not fear, it will be well with you for ever. *The whole course and tenour of Scripture speaks this, if it say any thing about the things of God, or the concernments of mens Souls.*

Secondly, Considering the Premises, we have occasion to enquire, and search diligently, till we come at the root of all our sinfull mistakes and miscarriages. And here I shall First admonish you of that, which most are not aware of: And Secondly, I shall advise, what is best to be done about it.

First, Whereas there is such an aptness and inclination in all to excuse and put off all from themselves, yea, and to put upon God himself, as much as in them lieth, the sin and misery which they alone have procur'd; I cannot forbear to fore-warn all of that accursed bad humour, which hath no other rise or root than Ignorance, and want of acquaintance with themselves. This, and nothing else, causeth them to quarrel, and pick occasions of so doing, with God, and his wayes of Grace and Providence, and any thing, but that [illegible] is in the fault. Poor Souls, ever since the old Serpent dropt his poyson into them, are infected with the same disease that the Devil is sick of. And what is that? Even all the sinfull corruption, that he contracted to himself,

by

by his rebellion against God. His fall began in his pride, and that pride abides upon him, as our saying is, *As proud as the Devil.* Certainly Man, since his fall, is extreamly proud and conceited of himself, though there be no cause for it, and cannot abide to be thought, what indeed he is. And yet he is but a proud fool, that thinks himself somewhat, when he is indeed nothing, or that which is worse. And this proud fool stayes not at home, but is alwayes abroad, looking to what others do, and living in a gross mistake of himself, and all his wayes. He thinks little of that inbred corruption, which hath leaven'd the whole lump of his nature, both in soul and body. He is asleep, and dreams of a good nature, and of an honest heart towards God, and a good desire after the things that concern his Salvation. He cannot believe himself to be an enemy to God, and his own Soul, and that he was born so. Far be it from him (he thinks) to be such a one, as procures and works out his own damnation, and is willing to think of nothing else. Yea, this proud fool will be very pettish, if he be told, that the best part about him, *is enmity against God*, and that he hates the wayes of Gods Commandments, and therein shews, that he loves death. But whatever he thinks, and will not believe it, all this is true, and that which he believes of himself, is a very falsity and lye. And being [illegible] as a fool, and no instruction or correction will put him out of his foolish conceits. Truly in this, the misery of sinfull man is great upon him, *viz.* He never looks inward or homeward, to consider

1 Tim. 3. 6.

Ro. 8. 7.

sider how it is with him; notwithstanding there are so many witnesses against him, of his folly and madness.

2. Scripture is large and plentiful in setting out the corruption of mans heart and nature. If I should mention particular Texts, I should abuse the Reader, who cannot but know them. But if any desire to peruse any of them, let them turn to *Gen.* 6. 5. *Rom.* 3. 10. *&c. Eph.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *Titus* 3. 3. *&c.*

3. Wofull Experience (if there were no more) is enough to convince men, if they would but sit down and consider how it is with them. What sober man can doubt of it, when he cannot but see, that he is much inclin'd to the Earth, the World, and the Flesh, and so averse from, yea and contrary to the things that concern his Soul? Doth not every man find it so, or might he not, if he would? I wish men would but question themselves sometimes about such matters, and say to their own Souls, *What ayles me? I can think and talk of this World, from morning to night, and never be weary, why, I am always serious and for Heaven, and the last day of my Soul, and how I shall do to Eternity, I never think, nor care to think of it.* If men (I say) would but sit down sometimes, and consider, what they affect, and what they abhor most, could they possibly be ignorant of the natural inclination that is in them to [illegible] with a neglect and loathing the matters of another World?

4. There is one thing more, that puts it beyond all dispute or question. How apt are all men, even from the Cradle, to close with, and run

uniafter the loves and vanities of this World? And how, without any teaching or prompting, they learn to do vainly and wickedly? They need not be learn'd to lye, and swear, and curse, and speak untoward things. And yet what adoe is there, to make them heed or learn any thing that good is? *Zophar* was right in what he saith. *Job* 11. 12. *Man is born a wild Asses Colt. An Asse, and a wild Asse, and the Colt of a wild Asse:* And all little enough, to set forth the desperate bruitish perverseness and blockishness of mans nature. The Apostle calls a natural mind, *not an enemy, but enmity it self*, Ro. 8. 7. And so it is, whatever men may think. We are all born, as full of enmity against God, and all that concerns our everlasting good, as we can possibly hold; and there is not one piece or particle of us, but is wholly depraved by that enmity.

Now man by Nature so fram'd, shews himself an Asses Colt, in his blockish brutish ignorance, and lamentable unacquaintedness with his own estate. There is somewhat, which the World calls Wisdom, but it is indeed Folly. The sound knowledge of God, and ones self, is the only true wisdom. Sure, whatever a man knows else, whiles he is ignorant of these, he knows nothing as he ought to know.

And since it is thus, we may soon discover, whence it comes, that men [illegible] and quarrelsome, to catch at any [illegible] that may serve to excuse themselves, though it be with charging God foolishly and wickedly. When people are sick and sore, they will complain of their

their beds, and those that attend them, and every thing about them, though 'tis their grief and disease within, that alone troubles them. So do men in their sins, complain of every thing, but that which is indeed the only cause of all that ayles them.

And now the work that lieth upon us, is to get an inward lively sense and feeling of all those disorders and distempers of our own hearts and natures, that carry us on to all the wayes of our undoing. He that hath a due and right apprehension of his own condition, as it is by nature, will soon perceive, that he hath no cause to complain of any thing more, than his own wicked heart. But herein the Devil hath the advantage against poor Souls, that are already intangled in his snares, that he keeps them in a gazing posture, to look on every thing without them, and so their eyes are held, as they see nothing of that which is the true cause both of their sin and misery. Now to such I say, That our own hearts and natures, infected with the poyson of the old Serpent, procure and cause to us all that we shall suffer for ever hereafter. The Devil tempts and enticeth us, and the World is an object, that occasions our corrupt hearts to work and move disorderly. But neither of these could hurt us, if it were not for our Flesh, i. e. the Sin that dwelleth within us. But this we take no notice of, and [illegible] first step, and run on in mistakes, [illegible] come to charge God himself with our miscarriages, rather than fail of an excuse for our selves.

If

If any ask, What is to be done in the case? The Answer is obvious, and at hand, and it is this, *viz.* That every man that wisheth well to himself, begin the work of his Salvation at home. I mean it thus, Let every man resolve, that he is of himself an enemy to God, and his own Soul, and inclin'd to nothing so much, as to his own utter undoing. For certain, such is every man by nature; and he that thinks otherwise, knows not himself, which to do is the beginning of wisdom. To know ones disease is the first step to health, and without it all medicines applyed are but arrowes shot at random, that seldom or never hit. The method of God, in turning a poor Sinner to himself, is first to open his eyes; and the first sight that such a Soul hath, is the sinfulness of his way, whence he comes to loath it, and can no longer abide in it. This discovery of sin to a Soul never stops, till it come to see all the sink and puddle, or (as I may call it) the Hell of corruption and filthiness that it in it, so as it cannot abide it self upon that account. And when any man comes once to such a discovery, then he finds so much at home, as he never complains of any but himself. He is so farr from charging God, as he takes no great notice of the Devil, but he falls foul only upon his own heart, and saith, That, and nothing else, hath undone him, as farr as he is undone; and if he could but obtain a better heart, the work of his Salvation would goe on as well as he could wish.

My Advice therefore in the case is this. O all you poor Souls, that are so unsatisfied about the matters

matters of your Salvation, as you are ready to call even God in queſtion, Goe home, and ſearch diligently, what you find in your own hearts. If you pleaſe once to do this to ſome purpoſe, I'le be your warrant for quarrelling and queſtioning the wayes of Gods Providence and Grace hence-forward. You will then be ready to juſtifie God, whatever he doth; and as ready to ſay, *'Tis I, 'tis I, and no other, that have brought my ſelf to this, that now I am; and if God leave me to ſuffer for ever, I have none to thank for it, but mine own wicked heart.* When men are (as too many) ignorant of the rule to try themſelves by, or elſe unwilling to ſearch and know their own eſtates, it is no marvel if they quarrel at others. But he that knows himſelf, as he ought to know, hath no quarrel in compariſon againſt any thing but himſelf.

This therefore is my Advice, That every poor Sinner fall to ſtudy himſelf, and never leave, till he apprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of his natural ſin and corruption. And for all that undertake the charge of Souls, I believe it to be the firſt and main part of their work, to bring poor ſilly people to a true ſight and ſenſe of the badneſs and baſeneſs of their hearts and natures; and in order thereunto, to bring them to a right underſtanding of the Law, that diſcovers ſin, and worketh wrath; I mean, to unde[illegible] ſpiritual ſenſe of it. As long as people think the Commandments are not broken, otherwiſe than in overt acts of cruelty, uncleanneſs, deceit, &c. 'tis no marvel if they pleaſe themſelves in a Phariſaical righteouſneſs.

A right understanding of the Commandments, in the spiritual sense of them, will lay open many evils, that otherwise men are not aware of; and lead them on to see the root of bitterness, that bears all those cursed fruits. As long as people are perswaded they are born Christians, so as to need no conversion, but only goe on in an outside profession of that Religion, which they never chose for themselves, but was chosen to their hands, it's no marvel if they are pleas'd with their condition, and look no further. But they should be made to know, That the Children of Christians, notwithstanding the priviledge of the Covenant, are by nature, and of themselves, the Children of wrath, and born in sin, even as others. They should be made to know, the absolute necessity of the new birth, and that there must be a thorough change of the whole man, so as to be no more, what they were by natural Generation; *But to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.* Joan. 3. 3, & 5. Tit. 3. 3, 4, 5. Eph. 4. 20, -- 24.

And for this end, there ought to be a frequent and earnest inculcating of such Doctrines, as serve to discover the sin and misery of man by nature, and the method of mens being translated out of the power of darkness, into the Kingdom of Christ. A learning of the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, (though that must be) and a rehearsing them, being only learn'd (as we say) by rote, is not enough to bring men to a due apprehension of their natural condition, and the way of recovering

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ing out of it. No; the mystery of all those is to be opened to them, with all plainness and power; and they must be call'd upon, to consider, what kind of Creatures they were in their conception and nativity, and what course must be taken for their recovery from under the bondage of Sin and Satan. And if poor ignorant Souls were once throughly inform'd of their sinfull and sad condition, as they are descended from, and bear the Image of the first *Adam*, they would find such distempers and disorders, such horrid unreasonable lustings in way of rebellion to all that is of God, as no complaints should be heard out of their mouths, except of their own base and wicked hearts.

These therefore I advise, First, To study and know themselves in manner and form aforesaid: And when that's once done to the purpose, I am confident, they will find themselves more inclin'd to a favourable construction of all the wayes of Gods grace and Providence. Pride and Ignorance (that seldome goe asunder) are the main things that engage men to dispute and quarrel about those matters, which can never be apprehended aright by any but humble Souls. For mens parts and learning, I am willing to value them, as farr as they may deserve. But I cannot account of them, in comparison of *learning Christ, as the truth is in him.* And if there were more of [illegible] Christ-learning, there would be less of dispute about the Counsels of God, which are rather to be ador'd in silence and reverence, than prated of by every audacious,

Eph. 4. 20, 21.

ous, malepert and pragmatical Spirit, (as sometimes they are) without either fear or wit. For whatever be the pretence, 'tis a wicked design to excuse our selves, that makes us so willing to find out somewhat else-where, that may serve our turn. And when we are once humbled low enough, in the sense of our own baseness, we shall have so much work at home, to keep us doing, as we shall have no list nor leisure to quarrel any other.

And to enforce this part of the Application a little further, by shewing the desperate untowardness of man by nature; Consider, how farr it is infected with the poyson of Satan, to oppose, and (if it were possible) to abase God, and all his infinite Excellencies. The Devil (whatever his sin was) for certain, did not submit to Gods order, and thereby he forfeited his right to all the glory and happiness in which he was first placed. And his doings ever since his fall have been such, as have shewed his pride, and spite against God, to the utmost. And is there not a spice of this in all the children of men? Are they not inclin'd to set up themselves, in opposition to God, upon any occasion? Hath not every sin somewhat of this in it? And is it not evident, in that we are so prone to contradict, and goe against the will of God, even where we have no temptation by the profit or pleasure of sin; more than *Augustine*, who bewails his robbing of Gardens and Orchards in his youth: *when* (as he saith) *the fruits were sowre, and had no sauce, more than the sin of the eater.* August. in Confess:

Nay,

Nay, is there not in every ſin more than an intimation, that we would have Gods will ſtoop to ours, and ſo have our wills to countermand his? There is certainly ſo much of diſdain in us, as if it were in our power, God ſhould have no authority over us. We cannot indeed break his yoak from off our necks: But would we not break it off, if we could? Would any man, by his good-will, and of his own inclination, be reſtrain'd from his ſinfull pleaſures, or give any account to God of any thing he doth, if he could help it? Nay, doth not the Spirit in us, luſt towards dethroning him, that he may have no command in the World? And if any queſtion this, I referr them to all thoſe inſolent, proud and arrogant expreſſions and practices of many wicked ones, of which there are ſo many inſtances in Scripture, and other ſtories. And, to ſhut up this; If all be well conſidered, it will appear, That all the queſtions and quarrels of men about the matters of Gods Kingdom, and the method of Salvation, are chiefly occaſioned, becauſe there is ſo much of the Devil, and ſo little of God in us. Were there in us a due acknowledgement of Gods Infinite Excellency, and Soveraign Authority, we ſhould never queſtion in the leaſt, whatever he doth, to be holy, juſt and good. Yea, we ſhould confeſs roundly, That whatever befalls us, or however it be with us, we our ſelves have procur'd and cauſ'd it, by our own wayes and doings. We ſhould ſay (as Gods Servants did of old) *We have treſpaſſed, and done fooliſhly and wickedly, unto us belongs ſhame, and confuſion of face for ever: And bleſſed be the Lord for evermore.*

Ex. 5. 2. 2 Reg. 6. 33. Eſay 14. 13, 14. Ezech. 28. 2. 2 Sam. 24. 17. Dan. 9. 5, 6, 7, 8. Pſal. 89. 51.

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If any desire further Advice in this case, I say Whoever thinks there is a God, must think of him so, as may become his infinite Excellency and Glory. *Psal.* 10. 4. We have this property of an ungodly man, *God is not in all his thoughts.* Not that he thinks, there is no God; but that he thinks not, there is a God, *i. e.* He never minds or heeds him, in the whole course of his life and actions. So many never eye or heed God in his Excellencies, to stand in awe of him, and tremble before him. They are too bold with him upon any occasion, and their words and deeds shew, they are not seasoned inwardly, with an holy humble reverence of his infinite Majesty. They speak not (it may be) at the same rate as *Pharaoh, Ex.* 5. 2. *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice,* &c. *I know not the Lord,* &c. As if he should have said, *You* (Moses *and* Aaron) *come, and command me, in the Name of* Jehovah, *who is* Israels *God, as you say. Who is this* Jehovah, *I pray, that I must be commanded by him? I tell you, I know him not, nor do I care for him. I'le do what I have a mind to, let him command what he will.* Though few act to such an height of insolency, as appear'd in him; yet there is the same haughty Spirit of disdain in all men by nature against the heavenly Majesty. They think much to be order'd and over-rul'd by one, of whom they know so little. And whoever observes, may easily [illegible] God hath little regard amongst worldly men, who will talk indeed a little sometimes, as if there were somewhat call'd a God; and yet in all their words and

deeds, ſhew no apprehenſions of his Excellencies, ſuch as do awe them to reverence and obedience, becoming his abſolute Soveraign Majeſty.

Now, as to believe, there is a God, and yet live as if there were none, is practical Atheiſm; ſo to ſpeak and think of him, otherwiſe than he is, is little better than Blaſphemy. And of ſuch Atheiſm and blaſphemy the World is full; and it is evident by this, that moſt have ſo little reſpect for God, and ſhew it in all they ſay and do. Reſpect, I ſay, for God, ſuch as ſhould be, and ſuch as becomes his infinite Glory. And how unreaſonable are men in this? Hear and conſider what God himſelf ſaith, *Malac.* 1. 6. *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter. If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? If I be a Maſter, where is my fear, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts unto you, O Prieſts, that deſpiſe my Name?* Here the Lord complains of their ſlighting him, more than any Creature, calling for ſuch reſpect, as was by any man commonly given to his betters. A Maſter or Father could get more reſpect than he, who was both, in an eminent way, to that people. And here one obſerves it, *As the grand deluſion, that blinds the viſible Church, to give good words, and fair titles to God, when no care is had of anſwerable walking. And the Lord makes uſe of that, which every one acknowledges to be a witneſs in the caſe, and ſo proves, That men in their duties to God, come fars ſhort of that, which very Nature will teach them in due to Creatures, ſtanding in the ſame relation.* And this alſo, *That want of reverence to, and an high eſtimation of God, is the*

root

root and rise of all our miscarriages, and an evidence, that we behave our selves neither as Sons nor Servants. Not to esteem of God as he deserves, is to dishonour him; as not to bless him, is in a sort to blaspheme him. God hates and abhorrs base and unworthy conceits of him, and his Majestick Name, when men take him not into their hearts, under the notion of an infinite HIGHNESS. It shews, there is no awe of God upon them, and that they count of him, as one like themselves, yea, and much below them.

Deum si quis parum metuit, valde contemnit: Fulgent.

And here I could easily enlarge in many Instances of a prophane and proud Spirit in ungodly men, not only in speaking and acting, as if there were no God above them, but speaking and acting many times in such a way, as if they studied to make God as vile as might be. In one word, shewing no reverent esteem, but rather a base undervaluing and contempt of him. They do not only act, as if there were no God, that would call them to an account, but in a way of opposition and scorn, as to shew, how little account they make of him. And for instance; Let one that fears before the Lord, be so bold, as to check a rude and ungodly company, met about some lewd and vile pranks and practices, (such as are too frequent and familiar) by minding them of God, and his commands, how ordinary is it, for such a knot of Companions to vent themselves the more in scorn [illegible] as if they were affronted by one, that had nothing to do with them. He that comes among them, with no better authority to awe them, had need

look to himself, that they fall not down right upon him. When righteous *Lot* said no worse to the *Sodomites*, than, *I pray you, Brethren, do not so wickedly*, Gen. 19. 7. *They said, Stand back, and they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a Judge: Now will we deal worse with thee, than with them.* A command or intreaty in the name of God (though the highest Majesty,) commonly proves an occasion, through mens deviliſh pride and disdain, of more and greater impieties and indignities. And if any should question this, let them but open their ears and eyes, and there need be no great dispute about it now adayes. Oh! Look round about, and see, how little regard there is of God, and his commands in the World; and whether there be any account had or made, whether God be pleas'd, or no, with that which is commonly done among men. This, this is enough to sadden any gracious Soul in the expectation of Gods appearances, to vindicate the honour of his great Name, by some remarkable judgements on the World.

And therefore I advise once more, and intreat, That there may be some regard had of God, and that it may be shewed so, as it may be seen, that God is in mens hearts and thoughts. An awful regard, or reverential esteem of God, would put a check upon mens ungodly practices, and upon their malepert disputes and questions about his w[illegible] doings. There would need no Argum[illegible] in print, to confute them in what they say and do: The awe of God would soon order them to another behaviour, than what com[illegible]

commonly appears in the moſt. And therefore I ſay again, Goe alone, and ſeriouſly reſolve thy ſelf of this, That there is a God, who made thee, and all this World, which thine eyes behold. And if thou art once ſo reſolv'd, thine own reaſon, and common ſenſe, will teach and prompt thee to a further conſideration, That this God, as he is infinitely above thee, ſo he is to be admir'd and ador'd with all poſſible humble reverence, ſuch as becomes an incomprehenſible heavenly Majeſty. If thou once reſolve, That he is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth: *That in him thou liveſt, and moveſt, and haſt thy being*; and that he alone diſpoſeth of thee, and all thy wayes, and will one day call thee to account for all that thou haſt done, thou wilt then ſee cauſe enough to fear and tremble at any the leaſt mention of his Name and Glory. Thou wilt no more diſpute, what he is pleas'd to do; but preſently bethink thy ſelf, how thou mayeſt do in every reſpect, ſo as to pleaſe aim. Act. 17. 28.

Men talk much in ordinary diſcourſe, of ſerving God, and a ſervice there is done to God by many; but whether any were done at all, or none, ſuch as many perform, may be a queſtion, as to the advantage of them that do it. * Wherever God is acknowledg'd and own'd in the way of worſhip which he hath commanded, there is an honour given him, more than amongſt Infidels and Idolaters. But they that ſerve the Lord in his own wayes of worſhip, muſt look further, and conſider, whether the ſervice [illegible] as doth ſome way ſute with the glory of his moſt excellent Majeſty, ſo as he will accept it. The Jews * Read for this, 2 Chron. 13. 8, 13.

after their return from captivity, were much in Sacrifices and Offerings: But yet saith the Lord, Malac. 1. 6. *Ye despise my Name*, because *they offered polluted bread*, v. 7. *The blind, and the lame, and sick*, v. 8. This God takes in scorn, and *bids them offer it to their Governour, to try, if he will be pleased with them*, v. 8. Nay, he *curses the deceiver*, v. 14. *for offering a corrupt thing*. And why? *Because* (saith he) *I am a great King, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen*. v. 14. God expects to be dealt withall in such a way, as men may shew that awfull regard they have of him, which when they neglect, it is all one to him, as if they did nothing at all. The customary, formal and superficial service done to God by many, is of as much account with him, as if they mocked him to his face*. And that for this reason, *viz.* Because they shew no regard of God, such as they owe to his infinite Soveraignty, Power and Glory. The service of God so performed, shews mens prophanness and impiety, more than their devotion. And yet this prophane contempt of God is born with us, and bred (as I may say) in our bones. And till we be throughly convinc'd of it, and humbled for it, we are in no capacity to close with God, so as he may be pleased with us. If thou wilt serve God with acceptance, resolve first of this natural enmity, that is in thee against God, and be humbled as low as Hell, for the pride of thine heart, swelling so much against him. And when thou knowest [illegible] as thou ought'st, the distance twixt the glorious God of Heaven, and such an earth-worm as thy self, thou wilt find thine

* Hag. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14.

heart

heart inclin'd to more favourable thoughts of God and his wayes, which is the main thing I am perſwading men to, in this Diſcourſe.

I ſhall yet a little further inforce that which hath been formerly hinted, more than once, *viz.* A ſerious conſideration of that enmity which is naturally in us againſt our ſelves, and our own ſouls. There is indeed a curſed ſelf-love in all men by nature, which cauſeth them to walk contrary to God; yea, and in ſome degree, to deſpite him, as the Devil doth: And this appears to be the root of all mans rebellion againſt God, in that our Saviour, calling all men home to God again, impoſeth upon them nothing elſe but *ſelf-denial*, *Mat.* 16. 24. But this natural, ſinfull ſelf-love, is indeed no other than perfect enmity to our ſelves; ſo as we may truly ſay, we are ſuch as hate our own ſouls: How elſe do we all that we can, to undo and deſtroy our ſelves? and do we not thus? and are we inclin'd by nature to any thing elſe? For certain, there's no way to advance, and (as I may ſay) to make our ſelves, but by walking in the way, wherein we may come to the enjoyment of God; and this is not the way of our own hearts, nor the way of the wicked and corrupted World of mankind; for *The world lieth in wickedneſs*, 1 *Joan.* 5. 19. or, in the wicked one, *i. e.* is wholly under the power and vaſſallage of the Devil. And this appears by the conſtant inclination of all the World, to walk in thoſe ways which the Devil prompts, and tempts them, *viz.* the ways of ſin and rebellion, againſt the righteous and

Ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται. In maligno poſitus eſt.

holy wills of God. This is the way of death and destruction, wherein men depart from God, and so cause him at last to say unto them, *Depart from me*, &c. How can we come to God, but in the waves of his Commandments? this is the way wherein he hath promised to be found of us; and to leave this way, and go in the way of our own hearts, is no other than turning our backs upon God, and casting him off, in hope to be happy in the enjoyment of somewhat else; this is the way of self-destruction, wherein men run on to ruine and perdition.

Mat. 25. 41.

Now I say again, consider, and that sadly, whether we are not all enemies to our selves, and our own souls, in chusing those wayes, which we cannot but know, have a direct tendency to our everlasting undoing? True, men do not consider this, but that's their folly and madness, the same that is in many, who never look after their worldly Estates to improve them, but spend, and squander them away, they care not how; we use to say of such ill husbands, that they are enemies to themselves, and will undo themselves and their Families, as indeed they do, according to what the Wise man saith, *The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness* (or sloth) *shall cloath a man with rags.* Just so do men impoverish, and undo themselves, as to their everlasting estates, by taking those wayes and courses that carry them on to the bottomless pit. The glutton and the drunkard would not go to hell, nor would ungodly men go to hell, were but both the one and the other, take the ready way to their undoing, and it is all one,

Prov. 23. 21.

as

as if they said, we will undo our selves, and we will be damn'd; seeing they go on in those ways wherein they cannot avoid and escape damnation: whatever they pretend, they do just as a man that should cast himself into the wide sea, and say, I will not be drown'd, but swim out again; or should stab himself at the heart, and say, I have no intent to kill my self: let such intend what they will, all rational and sober men know, they cannot live, but must die. There's an indissoluble tie between sin and death, so as we cannot take the one without the other. *Cast away from you all your transgressions*, &c. *For why will you die? Ezech.* 18. 31. as if he should have said, *If you do not the former, you must have the latter, and in the way you now go you seek your own death. He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul, Prov.* 8. 36. And how doth he wrong it? the next words shew, *He loves death.* To hate, and scorn the wayes of Christ, is to love death, it is so in the effect: he that hates to be reformed, (and too many such there are) hates to be saved; he that loves to be wicked, loves to be damn'd. The wicked World is wilde, and stark mad in this respect, and doth as all mad men do; a mad man casts off all care of himself, and is pleas'd in nothing, but his ravings and frantick pranks, and will not be perswaded to any better: such mad men are we in our sins, pleas'd with nothing so much, as that which most displeaseth God, and hath a direct tendency to our own destruction. Bring a Physician or Chyrurgeon to a mad man, and you [illegible] more a raving, so as you must bind him, and over-

master

maſter him by force, or he will admit of no ap-
plications to be made for curing him; all his
buſineſs is to do that which doth torment him
and will undo him: So do all wilfull ſinners;
they deviſe, and do nothing, but what make
for working out their damnation; they are
troubled about nothing, but that they cannot
ſin enough, and ſerve their worldly and fleſhly
deſires, ſo much as they would; and is not this
enmity againſt themſelves, and their own ſouls?
For what can a man do, to deſtroy his ſoul, and
pull upon himſelf the moſt intollerable condem-
nation, more than to ſin, as much as poſſibly he
can? The wayes of ſin are the wayes of de-
ſtruction to poor ſouls; and the only way to life
is a turning from all the wayes of ſin, with loath-
ing and indignation; and this no ſinner will
deny, if he pleaſe to ſit down and conſider it.
But ſuch is the impetuouſneſs of our luſts, as they
will not give us leave to entertain one ſerious
thought, about the ſad conſequence of what we
are a doing. Mad men have ſometimes their
lucid intervals, but ſo ſoon as any occaſion ſtirs
their frantick humour, they are as mad as ever;
in thoſe intervals they are as mad as before, but
do not act their madneſs ſo much. The world
of men are not alike wicked at all times, in acting
their wickedneſs, though their hearts are alwayes
ſet upon their wicked wayes. For their fair pro-
miſes ſometimes of amendment, they are no
more than what a mad man will promiſe in a
good mood.

And now, all you poor ſinfull Souls, conſider
your wayes, and be wiſe; *Be not as the horſe and*

mule

unle, that have no understanding, *Psal.* 32. 9. You are so by nature, and of your selves, through the poison which the Devil hath infus'd to you; only you have Reason, which Beasts have not; and you have a liberty to do otherwise than you do, if you had a mind to it: you are told, and you know the dangerous consequence of your sinfull wayes, and why will you die? Is there profit in destruction? Can there be pleasure in sinning for a moment, when the pains of Hell will be endless, and intollerable? Or can you devise a way, how you may enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and yet escape the torments of Hell for ever? Have you so much power in your hands, as to reverse the Acts and Decrees of Heaven, established by a declared Law, so as death shall not be the wages of sin? Or do you think to put off the righteous Judge of all the earth, in the last day, as well as you can abuse and baffle your Consciences, and faithfull Ministers now? I believe you have some such thoughts, or you would not take the courses that you do: But *O ye fools, when will you be wise? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.* Can you be such brutish fools, as not to know, that the World to come will be quite another thing than this present evil World? Here is a place to sin in; there will be only suffering for impenitent sinners, [illegible] wicked men talk wildly, as if their tongues were their own, and there were no Lord over them: There the righteous Lord will deal with them, and they will not have a word to [illegible] Consider how dead folk are dealt with here, are they not

Psal. 94 8. vers. 11.

not bound, and laid up where they cannot ſtir? Oh! think of it, as a preſage of that eſtate, wherein your ſouls, as well as your bodies, will be in another World. There your hands and feet will be tyed, and your mouthes will be ſtopp'd, ſo as you ſhall not be able to peep, or mutter one word: or if you ſhould rage, and cry out in thoſe everlaſting burnings, what will it avail you, ſo long as your bonds are made ſtrong, and you cannot break them? Oh! think of this you preſumptuous, daring ſinners, while there is time for repentance; for this is the ſad condition you are haſtning to, and nothing can be ſaid or done to ſtop you in your career. When you are moſt frolick, you are but heaping up fewel, to feed the everlaſting burnings. And when you are moſt froward in your wayes, you ſhew only the enmity that is in you, againſt your own ſouls. You ſay in effect, Let us alone, and trouble us not, we are in the way to Hell and deſtruction, and we will not be turn'd out of it; you are not willing to be damn'd, you'l ſay, but hope to be ſav'd, as well as others: So are Robbers and Murderers, &c. not willing to be hang'd, more than honeſt men; but honeſt men know that rogues and thieves take the ready way to the gallows. They may, ſome of them, eſcape mens judgement, and no queſtion, ſome of them ſometimes do; but how will you eſcape the judgement of God, who knoweth all, and can do every thing? And will he not (think you) make good his [illegible] his own Lawes? How elſe [illegible] himſelf, and ſhew that he is above [illegible] Think, when you ſee dead folk imprisoned,

prisoned; and bound up in their graves, how you will be hamper'd, and pinion'd, when you shall be brought forth to Judgement, and what pittifull poor sneaking worms you will then appear to be, when God shall sit on the Throne of his glory, and call all Nations before him, to be judged by him.

Now this is all the work you are a doing, *viz.* To pinion your selves, and lay upon you, those everlasting chains of darkness, wherewith you shall be bound, and cast into the fire unquenchable. Every sin you commit with greediness, and will not be perswaded to lay it aside, is one twist more, to strengthen the cords that shall bind you fast for ever, and puts more fewel to those everlasting burnings.

If all this do not convince you, cast your eyes back, and take a review of all those reasons, I have formerly given to prove, that you your selves only are in the fault, and that God is in no respect wanting to you. I shall repeat, and press some of them a little further.

Not to say (what is most certainly true) that Gods decrees have left you at liberty, to choose the way you have most mind to, and that you are not left out, as excepted persons, in the Act of General pardon, if you will be perswaded to receive Christ, as he is offered to you; and also that you have a liberty to act in order to your happiness, if you would use it, and not wilfully run on in your own ways.

1. Consider, what equity and reason there is in all the wayes of Godscommanding especially now under the New Testament, when we have that,

Rom. 12, 1. that, which the Apoſtle calls *our reaſonable ſervice*; We need not be prompted (as the Jews were) to underſtand why they are enjoyn'd us, for that, they are not good, becauſe they are commanded; but rather commanded, becauſe they are good. And for the wayes of his Providence and Grace, I would have you ask your own conſciences; what prerogative God challengeth to himſelf, more, than even mortal men are ready to count their due. Oh! that men would but think, how he can be indeed a God, and not have liberty to do what he himſelf pleaſeth. Though I ſtand ſtill to defend, that all Gods wayes are righteouſneſs and truth, being Eph. 1. 11. all *according to the counſel of his will*, and managed by infinite wiſdome. Yea our belief of a Deity, and one abſolute ſoveraign Lord God, doth neceſſarily inferr a belief of all his wayes to be moſt holy, juſt, and good. And will you not then obey, and ſubmit? Oh! conſider, what can be ſaid againſt it.

2. Conſider further what your own conſciences ſay in this caſe, and if they ſpeak out now, what ſometimes you would not hear, how will you be able to abide the clamours of them, when there will be no way left you, to bribe them, or ſtop their mouthes, as now you can make a ſhift to do. You now find them to ſtir, and work ſtrongly upon occaſion, and therefore may preſume, they will one day be too hard for you, and have the dominion over you. I tell you those conſciences of yours, are Gods witnesses against your wicked wayes, and your forewarnings to flee from the wrath to come;

come; ſo that you have no excuſe upon this account.

3. Ask your ſelves, ſo as to anſwer the queſtion ſeriouſly, Why you are ſo impatient of ſharp rebukes, and ſound admonitions, from the Word, whether by faithfull Miniſters, or others, applyed to you. Will not your own Conſciences then tell you, that your caſe is the ſame with thoſe ſick and wounded people, who had rather dye, than endure the pain of having their wounds ſearch'd, or their diſeaſes cur'd by untoothſome medicines? Yea, will not your Conſciences ſay, That you might have been healed, as well as others, that were content to ſubmit to the methods of cure preſcrib'd them? You cannot ſay, *There is no balm in* Gilead, *there is no Phyſician there*: *Why then is not your health recovered?* Surely, for this reaſon, and no other, That when the Lord would have healed you, you would not be healed. Jer. 8. ult.

4. Ask your ſelves again, How it comes to paſs, that you are alwayes wharting and quarrelling thoſe, that pretend ſo much to God, and the wayes of his Commandments? Is it indeed, becauſe they are ſo bad and baſe, as you would make them? Or is it not rather, becauſe they ſhine before you, to ſhew you the good, and the right way, and you have no mind to walk in it? Is not their eſchewing your ungodly wayes, a check upon you, that you cannot ſo freely take your ſwinge in them, and therefore you hate the light of their good works, becauſe it discovers the filthineſs of your beaſtly [illegible] Oh! Remember and conſider, they [illegible] witneſſes,

nesses, to leave you without excuse. Yea, if they were as bad as you would make them, yet that will be no excuse to you, who should have done what they did not, your own Consciences being Judges.

5. Once more. Do not you accuse your selves, in calling so often for such extraordinary appearances of God in providence, as may convince you, when you have had many such, and are but the more hardned and enrag'd against God? How usuall is it, for men to have strange and almost miraculous rescues and recoveries, or to see and observe such in others, and yet 'tis not easie to give many instances of Converts by occasion of such wonderful deliverances. To say no more, the appearances of God in this age have been as remarkable and admirable almost as any, and yet the ungodliness of men generally, is most notorious notwithstanding. Now what have you to say against this? Shall not these be witnesses against you?

6. Answer me yet in one question more. Why (I pray you) do you so much magnifie the Saints of old, who are now in Heaven? Shall not they (think you) be your Judges? Why, (Sirs,) they were all of them holy men, that led their lives on earth, as becommeth Saints? and they were far from spending their time in sinfull [illegible] as you do. That their righteous Souls [illegible] your Consciences will tell you they lead a life, as contrary to theirs as white, or darkness to light. Do not you then, in your applauding them with your

your mouths, and confessing them to be now Saints in Heaven, judge and condemn your selves, and call them to witness against you, that you had light held out to you by their examples, but you wilfully refus'd to walk in the way to Heaven, wherein they went before you?

7. I shall say no more of this, after I have pos'd you with this one question more: There are some of your good fellows (you know it to be so) that have cried out most lamentably upon their death-beds, as one did once, *O! Call time again, call time again.* O! What would not they have given, to have recovered the time which they had mis-spent? Now these will be your Judges. For whatever they thought before, then they were of the mind, that a wise and carefull expending our time here, whiles we are alive, is the way to obtain peace and comfort when we come to dye. They could not then say, (as some do in their youth and strength) *If we are Elected, we shall be saved, and if not, we must be damned*, and so quietly sleep away, and put it to the adventure. No; Conscience (if it be then awakened) will tell you somewhat else. It will tell you then, That you might have employed your selves to better purpose, and that if you had taken the same course, that the Saints do, while they are on earth, you might depart in peace, as well as they. Yea, let me tell you, Conscience, when you come to dye, will trouble you about [illegible] your wilfull rejecting the offers [illegible] mercy, when they were made to you, [illegible] using the wayes of sin, when you had been often told,

they were the ready way to Hell and Destruction.

And now I say again, Whatever disputes and reasonings there be among some, about the method, and manner, and matter of Gods Decrees, Let all poor Souls consider, in due time, what is that way of life, which is held out, and offered to them in the Gospel. We cannot know, what God hath decreed, till it be some way reveal'd to us: But we may know (if we will) what is the way of life, as certain as God is true, who hath reveal'd it. God (I am sure) cannot lye, and his mouth hath spoken it, and his finger hath written it, *That whoever believeth, shall be saved.* I need not cite or quote the Texts of Scripture, that speak, with one mouth, the mind of God in this: Whoever hath read or heard the Scripture, cannot but know this to be an unmoveable Foundation-truth.

And therefore I desire men seriously to consider, how they will excuse themselves one day, when they shall be question'd, Why they did not believe on Christ offered to them in the Gospel. For no doubt, if they do this, as God commands and requires, they shall be saved, or God must prove a lyar. And for any decree of God, to hinder men from believing on Christ, I hope enough hath been said before, to shew, there is no such thing. Besides, the extent of Christs death (as hath been shewed) is large enough to reach, and take in all, that will come to him. And there is nothing but a froward wicked heart stands [illegible], and their happiness, in the enjoyment of God. Wherefore, I say again,

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in the name of the Lord, as our Saviour in a different ſenſe ſaid to *Martha*, *Joan.* 11. 40. *If thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God. He that believeth not God, hath made him a lyar, becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life*, 1 Joan. 5. 10, 11, 12. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not on the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, Joan. 3. 36. Here we ſee, as in all the Scripture beſide, That Faith, and Faith only, gives us an intereſt in eternal life; and that this, and nothing elſe, will be the condemnation of the World, that they believed not on the Son of God tendred to them, as one that *can ſave to the utmoſt, all that come unto God by him.* Heb. 7. 25.

If any ſay, That ſome have never heard of Chriſt, and then *how can they believe on him, of whom they have not heard?* Ro. 10. 14. I ſhall not here diſpute with them about this, but refer them to what I have ſaid before, deſiring them withall, to underſtand me now, as meaning all that have heard of Chriſt, amongſt whom there have been many that ſhall not be ſav'd. And of theſe I ſay again, their condemnation ſhall be only upon the account of their unbelief. Either becauſe they ſet light by Chriſt, when they heard of him, as many do to this day, not ſo much as owning the profeſſion of the Gospel, or elſe *they receive the grace of God in vain*, and turn it into wantonneſs, by uſing it, as *an occaſion to the fleſh.* 2 Cor. 6. 1. Jude 4. Gal. 5. 13.

Now, For a Concluſion of this whole Diſcourſe; I ſhall deal with theſe laſt, deſiring them to conſider, Whether they give all diligence, to walk in the way of life, which God hath laid before them. And all that I intend, is to ſhew their miſtakes about it, and to adviſe and direct them in it.

But whiles I was about this, there were brought me ſome Objections, which though they be (as I conceive) ſufficiently anſwered already, at leaſt the chiefeſt of them, yet ſomewhat I ſhall add further, to explain what was ſaid before.

Obj. If God be ſo willing, that men ſhould repent and believe, why do they not repent and believe? *For who hath reſiſted his will*, *Ro.* 9. 19. This we find by our ſelves, that if we will do ought, we do it if we can; and if we do it not, it is becauſe we have not power to do as we would.

Sol. For the Will of God, as to the Salvation of all, in caſe they repent and believe, there is no queſtion; and ſo (as I remember) ſome underſtand the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. But that is not the queſtion, but this rather, How God wills the repentance of men, who never repent. For ſeeing God can do whatever he will, why are not they alſo converted? And to this I anſwer, That God wills the converſion of Sinners, ſo as their converſion is well-pleaſing to him, and accepted with him; as on the contrary, he is diſpleaſed with Sinners, ſo long as they live in impenitency. *The holy Angels rejoyce over one Sinner that repenteth*, and God much more, ſeeing it

Luc. 15. 10.

it is his command, that they repent. And how ſhould God will mens repentance, otherwiſe than he doth? He declares his will in his command, and in his promiſe of acceptance, and in his refuſing none upon their repentance; and for any other will of God, concerning this or that mans repentance, who knows it, or where hath God reveal'd it? What! Would you have God to decree and effect the converſion of all and every one, whether they will or no? If any ſay, No; but we would have God to deal with all indifferently, as being all the work of his hands: I anſwer, That ſaving to God but ſo much liberty, as all men ordinarily take to themſelves, his dealings with men are indifferent, and his wayes moſt equall, ſeeing he hath ſo prepar'd, as men need not periſh, except they will themſelves. And therefore, I ſay once more, they periſh and dye in their ſins, only becauſe they chuſe the wayes of their deſtruction. How then dare any man make any further queſtion about Gods will of ſaving men, when he hath ſo decreed, and ſo provided, that men may be ſaved if they will? I mean it thus, If they do not wilfully refuſe their Salvation, when it is offered them, by an obſtinate rejecting the way he commands them to walk in, and to which they are invited and encouraged by his promiſe, wherein it is impoſſible that he ſhould lye. And this we affirm ſtill, according to what hath been ſaid before.

Obj. Seeing it is God's will, that men ſhall be damned, in caſe they believe not, [illegible] not appear, that there is in God a will of ſaving, rather than of damning, becauſe there is in all men

a proneneſs and inclination to unbelief and impenitency, more than to faith and repentance.

Sol. We grant, there is a proneneſs and inclination in all men by nature, to unbelief and impenitency, with an untowardneſs and enmity to faith and repentance. But we ſay again, as before, That men may repent and believe, if they will. For men are not damn'd, for that they cannot repent, though they be never ſo willing to it; but they are damn'd only, becauſe they will not repent, nor turn from their evil wayes, but wilfully goe on in them, againſt all means and methods us'd for the reclaiming of them. And may not God then ſay, and ſwear too, as he doth, *Ezech.* 33.11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.*

Ezech. 18. 30,31,32.

Obj. I want the helps that others have, and was never brought up in learning, as many are.

Sol. To this I anſwer, That Chriſt may be learn'd by the veriеſt Ideots, if they have but a willing mind, as ſoon, and as eaſily, as by the greateſt Maſters of Arts and Sciences. And in this caſe we may ſay, what hath been commonly ſaid in a different ſenſe, *That the greateſt Clerks are not alwayes the wiſeſt men.* The Devil is certainly the greateſt Schollar below Heaven, as to all things pertaining to this World: Yet he is never the nearer to the learning of Chriſt, and the knowledge of God in Chriſt. Humane learning is a very precious ornament and endowment in them that have it. But through the ſinfull corruption of man, it many times proves to be an occaſion of hindring them, in their being taught

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by Christ, as the truth is in him. The great Rabbies (you know) were Christs most bitter enemies; and *Not many wise men, after the flesh, are called,* saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *The Gospell preacheth only Christ the power of God, and the wisdome of God*; so as the weakest understanding is as capable of this Heavenly and Spiritual learning as any others. Suppose thou canst not so much as read a Chapter, what hinders, that thou dost not hear others read? Whatever thy apprehension, and memory be, there wants nothing to thy denial of thy self, and all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, if thou do not retain a wilfull, and froward heart against Christ, and his commands. Learn only what the Grace of God teacheth thee, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. and thou hast learnt enough. 'Tis not thy want of other Learning, can hinder, or keep thee from Heavens way, if thou wilt repent heartily of thy sinnes, and turn from all iniquity, with a full and absolute resignation of thy self to serve the Lord Christ. *This knowledge* (I may truly say) *is easie to him that doth understand*, Prov. 14. 6. Where he that doth understand, cannot be meant otherwise, than of a man that hath an humble and an honest heart; because in the same place, he is set in opposition to *A scorner, who seeketh wisdome*, (as 'tis there said) *and findeth it not.* The Original is only [*and not*,] and the meaning is plainly this, That proud scornfull men can never attain to true Wisdome, [illegible] is easie to an humble, and willing minde. An[illegible] set forth at large, *Prov.* 2. 1, 7. to the perusal of which place I refer the Reader, and so proceed.

Eph. 4. 21.

1 Cor. 1. 24.

Obj. I want time to attend the working out of my Salvation; for I am a ſervant, and muſt work to pleaſe my Maſter, *&c.* I have but little to live upon, and muſt ſpend all my time, to maintain my ſelf, and my Family.

Sol. Strange! Cannot ſervants work to pleaſe God, and their Maſters too? the Apoſtle thought they might do both, though Servants then were moſtly Slaves, and many of them had Heathens and Infidels to their Maſters. Thou art a Servant, and canſt not have ſo much time, as others who are free; yet know this for thy comfort, that thy faithfulneſs, and diligence in thy Maſters buſineſs, is pleaſing to God, and an honour to the Goſpel. If thou haſt not ſo much time as ſome others, for waiting on God in his Ordinances, and in all the duties of his Worſhip and Service, yet a careſull improvement of the time thou haſt; and what cannot be denyed thee, will be accepted, when thou haſt no more. I ſay not, thou ſhould'ſt ſerve thy Maſter in the wayes of ſin, with a neglect of thy duty towards God: But I ſay, uſe the time thou haſt, to the beſt advantage, and thou ſhalt be accepted according to what thou haſt. But beware, thou be not one of thoſe Servants, who have Maſters, that are willing to teach them, and they have no minde to learn the wayes of God: Beware alſo, thou pretend not thy Maſters buſineſs, when thou art not careſull to redeem the time, and improve the ſeaſons, which may be recovered by thy diligence [illegible]

1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. Tit. 2. 9, 10

The [illegible] in effect I ſay to ſuch as are poor; they cannot ſpare ſo much time, as others can, they

they may be accepted in what they have, if there be but a willing minde. And to all these I say further, though there is need for all to addresse themselves to God in prayer and praise, &c. as we all need our ordinary repasts to recruit our faint spirits, and frail bodies; yet the life of Religion is shew'd most in the duties of our particular callings, and personal relations; in these we must spend, and expresse the strength, and grace we obtain of God, by our waiting upon him in Ordinances, and Religious exercises. A Christian is not bound to spend all his time in Reading, and Hearing, &c. much, yea most of it, must be laid out on the works of their callings, wherein our diligence, and integrity, and faithfulness is our living to God. And if in our Earthly employments, we retain Heavenly affections, making Conscience of all we do, as desirous, to approve our selves to God, in this we do Gods work, and keep on, in our way to Heaven. No honest Calling is, or can be any hinderance to the life of Godliness, if we labour, in all we do, to keep a good Conscience. If our small stock, or mean estate will not allow us so much time, for some Religious exercises, as others have, we may notwithstanding practise Holiness, and exercise our selves unto Godliness, in our lawfull employments, if we have honest hearts, as well as they.

Obj. God requires no more than he gives; Now God hath not given me to Repent, &c. and what can I do?

Sol. This (I think) hath been sufficiently answer'd already, yet I shall add a word or two more. God requires no more than he gives; so

ſo ſay I; but I ſay alſo, he will require ſo much as he gives. Now canſt thou, or dar'ſt thou ſay, that God hath not given thee time, and ſpace to Repent? yea hath he not waited long for thee? yea dar'ſt thou ſay, he hath not given thee to Repent, *&c.* when he hath given thee light, to ſee the errour, and the evil of thy wayes? what would'ſt thou have? God hath commanded thee, and intreated thee, and by many, and ſundry motions made to thee, ſometimes allured thee, and at other times affrighted thee. His Word, his Spirit, his Works of Mercy and Judgement, have beſpoken thee, again and again, to caſt away thy Tranſgreſſions, but thou would'ſt not; and only becauſe thou loved'ſt thy ungodly wayes, and found'ſt pleaſure in them, thou would'ſt not be perſwaded to leave them. And wilt thou ſay yet, that God hath not given it thee, to return to him? I hope thou wilt not blaſpheme God openly, in ſaying, that he hath tempted thee to thy evil wayes. Neither did he, or any other force thee, for thou waſt wholly inclin'd, and addicted to them, and angry at all that would put thee out of them. I ſhall ſay no more, but only deſire thee, to anſwer thy ſelf, and thine own Conſcience, in this one Queſtion, *viz.* why thou doſt not forſake thy wicked ways? I ſay again, ask, and anſwer that Queſtion ſincerely, and as in the ſight of God, and thou ſhalt finde thine own Heart will tell thee, that thou lik'ſt, and lov'ſt the profits, and the pleaſures of thy ſinfull [illegible] as thou haſt no minde to leave them. And if thou finde it not ſo, call me lyar upon this account. Now whoſe fault is it, that

that thou loveſt thy ſins? But I muſt go on to finiſh this Diſcourſe. And for a concluſion, I ſhall very plainly and briefly, ſhew the miſtakes of men, about the only way of life, with the beſt advice I can give about it.

The only way of Life, that I know of, is believing on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. For this we have a command, and a promiſe, as is to be ſeen in very many Texts, which I need not mention, becauſe they are obvious to the meaneſt underſtanding. This is the tenour of the only Covenant of Peace and Life, *If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou ſhalt be ſaved*, Ro. 10.9, 10, 11. Joan. 3.16, & 36, &c. Yea this is receiv'd among all profeſſed Chriſtians, that believing on the ſon of God is the way of Life, and Salvation. But the moſt of thoſe, who profeſs the Faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, are much to ſeek, and at a great loſs, about the way of believing, to the ſaving of their Souls. For their ſakes therefore, I ſhall lay before them, the good, and the right way of Salvation, by Faith in the Son of God, and aſſure them in the name of God, that whoever is reſolv'd to walk in that way, ſhall as certainly be ſaved, as thoſe who are already in Heaven. And this I ſhall do, that (if it be poſſible) they may be perſwaded, no more to diſpute, or quarrel Gods Decrees, or Chriſts dying for all Sinners; or the inability, that is in all men by nature, to all that's ſpiritually good, or any thing elſe, beſides the frowardneſs of their own corrupt, and perverſe hearts.

For the way of Salvation by Faith, it is this: The Goſpel, which only reveals the way

of

of living by Faith, makes an offer of Christ, to all without exception, in case they Believe, *Joan.* 3. 16. and many other places. And when any man is effectually perswaded to receive Christ, as he is offer'd, then he Believes, to the saving of his Soul. If any desire to know further, what it is to receive Christ, I answer, that it is the Souls hearty consenting to have him, upon the same terms, on which he is offer'd. This is that, which (as I may say) makes up the match between Christ, and any Soul; so as thence forward, it stands in relation to Christ, as a Woman to her Husband, after her consent obtain'd, and declar'd, and so hath an interest in him, and all his Estate. This is the eminency, and precedency of Faith, to all other Graces, that it is the Souls consenting to have Christ, as her all in all. For when the Soul so consents, a man is thereupon justified, and accepted with God. This consent indeed doth imply love and obedience, and faithfulness to Christ, all our dayes; and if there be not afterwards a performance of all accordingly, for certain the consent at first, was not sincere, and hearty. *For we are delivered from the hands of our enemies, that we may serve him,* &c. Luc. 1. 74. *We are redeem'd from all iniquity to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works,* Tit. 2. 14. But yet the consent which is first given, sets a man in the state, and relation of a justified person, which afterwards he proves himself to be, by yielding willing obedience to all the Commands of Christ. For Love, and all the [illegible] in a Christians whole course, are but the performance of what was promis'd, when he

he first consented to have Christ for his only Lord and Saviour; and where these do not attend, there never was any hearty consent. But Faith (I say again) hath the precedency, in that it is the Souls consenting to take Christ upon his own terms, and so Faith alone justifies us.

Now, if what hath been said of our being justified by Faith alone, be rightly apprehended, there will need no dispute about the concurrence of works in our justification. But leaving all such disputes, as no way concerning my present purpose, I shall only take notice of such mistakes, as are ordinary, and do offer themselves (as it were) to us, upon this occasion, to be considered of.

For certain, the way of believing, is the only way of living with God for ever. But the mistakes of men about this way, are the great occasion of their miscarriage: I mean it of such as hear the Gospel, have Christ offered to them, and do profess to believe on him, as all or most do with us.

There are only two that deserve our notice, and if there be any other, they may be reduc'd to these. And these two are extremes, not so farr from one another, as both are from the right way of living by Faith.

First, Some (though they pretend not to merit) do almost turn the Covenant of grace into a Covenant of works, and so pervert the Gospel of Christ to their own destruction. I do not mean, That they make account to [illegible] by vertue of the first Covenant, made with *Adam* in

in innocency: For never was there a man, *Jew* or *Gentile*, that did not acknowledge himself a sinner. And this appears, in that all of them have used means, true or false, right or wrong, to make an attonement for their Souls. But I mean such as the *Jews*, *Who attained not to the Law of righteousness, because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the Law*, Ro. 9. 31, 32. [*As it were*] Not wholly, or altogether, but in a sort, as it were, or after a manner. And how was that? Surely thus: When they knew themselves sinners before the Lord, and should have look'd to Christ only, as the alone propitiation for sin, they applyed themselves to their legal services and sacrifices, hoping to find acceptance with God, though they look'd not at all by faith unto him, who was the end of the Law, and all the righteousness of men before God. Thus they perverted the Covenant of grace, and made it of none effect to them, and so do others to this day. And if you desire to know how and wherein, I answer, thus:

Αλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων νόμου.

When God hath shewed us Christ, as our only Salvation, and given us means for bringing us near to him, and building us up in acquaintance with him, *viz.* His Word and Sacraments, *&c.* What do the most of professing Christians count of more, than hearing, and receiving the Sacraments, and their good Prayers, *&c.* as so much good service done to God; and make account they please God well enough, so long as these services are not wholly omitted or neglected by them.

This

This is a great mistake, and for a further discovery of it, take notice,

1. That working and doing what is commanded us of God, being the condition of the Covenant made with *Adam*, there is in every man since, an inclination to think of pleasing God, by somewhat that he himself doth. And this is to be ignorant of the righteousness of God, which is nothing else, but the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ to the will of his Father. For this the Apostle avouches, *Ro.* 5. 19. *That by this alone we are made righteous.* For our own performances, they are all imperfect; and when we do our utmost, we do but endeavour to perform the promise which we made to Christ, when we first consented to receive him as our Lord and Saviour; and those performances have all of them need to be pardoned, as to the defects of them, through the application of his righteousness to our selves by faith. Yea, and if we are not first united to him, by a sincere and sound faith, all our performances are an abomination, as the Scripture speaks often, *Pro.* 15.8. *Pro.* 28. 9. *Psal.* 66. 18. *&c.*

2. The way that God hath laid out for us to walk in, that we may live, is first to know and acknowledge our own lost estate and condition by sin, with an utter impossibility to recover our selves otherwise, than in a way of free pardon by grace, which we receive by faith. And when we have thus clos'd with Christ, and receiv'd him, as our only [illegible] before God, then in way of thankfulness [illegible] speakable grace, we are to set our [illegible] the

the service of Christ our Lord Redeemer. This our obedience to our Lord and Saviour, is not any the least part of that price, which was paid to procure and purchase our pardon. Nor is our consenting to receive Christ, as he is offered to us, by faith, any part of amends made to God, for the wrong done him by mans sin and transgression. Only the righteousness and obedience of the Son, in doing and suffering all that was enjoyn'd him by his Father, is the price of our Redemption, and that wherein God is well pleased. And so is Christ offer'd to us, as our all and only righteousness, which we receive by faith, as a man receives a rich gift freely given him, upon no other condition, than his willing and hearty acceptance of it. The gift is not the less free, because a man cannot be enriched by it, unless he receive and take it. No more is our justification by Christs righteousness less free, because we have not the benefit, till by faith we apply it to our selves. The Feast is prepared without our cost or care, and all we do, is but to come and partake of it, which is done only by our believing on the Lord our righteousness. As for our obedience to Christ, and serving him all our
Luc. 1. 74. dayes in holiness and righteousness before [illegible] is but going on to the full possession of the [illegible] venly inheritance, and the same with *[illegible] our Salvation, Philip. 2. 12.* Or, [illegible] *our Sanctification, 1. Cor. [illegible]* [illegible] ploying all our abi[illegible] [illegible] pointed for the accomplish[illegible] [illegible]lvation. When we first [illegible] with the heart, we are put into the right [illegible]

of their Faith, and Hope, and Joy in God; as *Nehemiah*, and *Paul*, &c. But too many (we may fear) make it the ground, and foundation, and therein miserably deceive themselves. For 'tis Faith alone receiving Christ, as he is freely offer'd; that gives us all our interest in God, as it disclaims all Self-righteousness, and Creature-confidence, and gives God all the glory of our Salvation, by his rich Grace. For our good Works (whatever they are) they are no part of our Righteousness before God, but only our evidences, that we have Believed, as God hath Commanded; and so are in the only right way to our everlasting Salvation, as we hope for it in Heaven. But this is a Mystery far above thy reach, viz. To do all, as if thou must be saved by thy Works, and yet when all is done, to look on all, as abominable before God, and to rest by self, and all thy Works, upon Gods free Grace in our Lord Jesus Christ for Acceptance, as much as if thou had'st done nothing at all. Thou reckon'st upon Works of Piety, Mercy, and Charity, which thou hast done; not considering, that thou hast somewhat even in them to be pardon'd, and that no Satisfaction to Gods Justice can be made by any thing, never so well done, by any Creature, or by all of them together.

Neh. 13. 14, & 31. 2. Cor. 1. 12.

If any shall think I wrong them in this, I confess (what I hope, and believe,) that there are many found, and sincere Believers, who are really acquainted with the [illegible] of Living by Faith. But I have not Charity enough to perswade my self, that all Professing [illegible] such,

such, as know by experience, what it is to live by Faith in the Righteousnes of the alone Saviour, whiles they see nothing in themselves, but just matter of Condemnation: Once, for certain, to deny our own Righteousnes, is the hardest part of Self-denial, and every experienc'd Christian, will (I am confident) be ready to avow this.

But too many, that profes Faith in Christ, are too like the *Jews*, who made great account of Sacrifices, and Offerings; not understanding, or heeding Christ in them, though he was the Life, and Soul of them, and without him, they were but an empty shadow, or an unsavoury Carcas, indeed an Abomination. What adoe is made by many about the Sacraments, to be applyed to young, and old; as if the *opus operatum* in Gods Ordinances, were of such avail, where, there is no Grace concurring with them? The Sacraments are indeed Necessary, by reason of Gods Command, and as means of his appointment, for our edification in Grace, and Communion with God. They are the Seals which God hath annex'd to the New Covenant; and the contempt or neglect of them, when they may be us'd, and applyed in Gods way, and order, is no small transgression. Nor can we justly expect the End, so long as we neglect the Means, which God hath appointed for obtaining it. But yet there is not such a necessity of the Sacraments, as of Christ, and Faith in him; and we may have, and hold fast these without the Sacraments, else [illegible] to those poor Souls, who by the hand of God [illegible] way, or other in any kind, are debarr'd the

Necessitate Præcepti, Medii.

the uſe of them. 'Tis more than probable, that many children died in *Iſrael*, before they were circumciſed, which was not, by Gods order, till the eighth day: And yet we dare not therefore ſay, they were caſt-awayes. The Paſſover was probably, in ſome of the Kings reigns, utterly neglected, (or elſe obſerv'd only in private, if yet it was ſo) as in *Ahaz* his time: For *he ſhut up the doors of the Lords houſe*, which ſo ſtood ſhut, till *Hezekiah opened them, in the firſt year of his reign.* And how could the *Jews* in *Babylon* keep the Paſſover, or offer any Sacrifice, for 70. years together? And yet who dare ſay, that the faithfull and godly among them, all that while, had no communion with God? Was not the Ark in a private place, ſo as the people enquir'd not at it, in the dayes of *Saul*, 1 *Chron.* 13. 3. True, the want of Ordinances duly adminiſtred, in the publique Aſſemblies, is a ſad calamity, and a token of Gods diſpleaſure againſt a people. But yet God never leaves his people, without ſufficient helps, to acquaint themſelves with him, in ſuch a ſad condition; and there is no ſuch neceſſity of them, as enforces any to an undue and diſorderly adminiſtration of them, beſides the rule of that Word and Law, which hath enjoyn'd them. We had need beware of giving to them, what we owe to Chriſt alone, and faith in his name, leſt we be guilty of ſeeking after righteouſneſs, as it were, by the works of the Law, *Ro.* 9. 32.

2 Chron. 28. 24. 2 Chron. 29. 3. Ezech. 11. 16.

What adoe is made alſo, by too many, about duties of worſhip, when it is to be fear[illegible] Religion goes very little further, and [illegible]

tle care of improving the Word and Prayer to any other purpose, after attendance on them is once at an end. The Word is precious, and so are all duties of worship, to all such as know by experience the blessed effects of them upon their own Souls. But 'tis an easie mistake for men to rest in the duty done, and think all is well, if they have been at it, though little be done after it, to express the vertue and power of it, or to shew any impressions of it on the Soul. There are other duties to be done of all Christians, to shew the life and power of godliness in them, and if these latter be wanting, all attendance on Ordinances will be little other than an empty outside Formality.

The same may be said of Family-duties, Morning and Evening daily perform'd, if there be not a conscionable performance of the moral Law in justice, fidelity, mercy and charity, us'd and practic'd in all our dealings with men. And when we have done all, both the one and other, yet Christ, and his righteousness, are all in all to us, and the rest no better than a filthy ragg. But of this more in the next that follows.

Secondly, A second Mistake seems to lye as much on the other hand, *viz.* When men count of being saved by faith and hope in Christ alone, and live all the while in a constant practice of all ungodliness and unrighteousness, which is *to turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into wantonness* [illegible]. Such were the *Jews* of [illegible] *Temple of the Lord*, &c. *Jer.* [illegible] *continued to steal, murder, and commit*

mit adultery, and ſwear falſely, &c. *v.* 9. And what account God had of them, is to be ſeen at large, *Eſay* 1 *cap.* 10.–16. *v.* *Eſay* 66. 1.–5. *Pſal.* 50. and many other places to the ſame purpoſe. The ſumm of all is this, That they, and all their ſervices, were an abomination to the Lord. And ſo is the faith of all prophane and ungodly men. who profeſs their hope in Chriſt alone, to be ſaved by him. Such faith as Saint *James* ſaith, *cap.* 2. *is dead*, having no works to prove and juſtifie the life and power of it. *The Devils believe, and tremble*, which theſe pro- Jac. 2. 19. phane wretches do not. And ſhall their Faith ſave them? Juſt as the Devil's faith ſhall ſave him, and no otherwiſe. Theſe are the believers, that have ſo much faith, as carries them to the places of publique worſhip, where perhaps they ſometime laugh, or ſleep out the time, as if they had nought elſe to do there. And what is done there by their Miniſters, ſomewhat, or nothing, or ſomewhat to no purpoſe, with them, it matters not. The worſe, and the leſs, the better. As for heeding what they hear, or practicing as they have prayed, (Alas poor Souls) they regard little more than the doggs, that goe to Church on *Sundayes* ſometimes, as well as their Maſters. Theſe are believers, that live in all manner of ſenſuat delights and pleaſures, and make no conſcience, no not ſo much as Heathens, of any thing that favours of common honeſty. But becauſe this hath been touch'd upon before by the way, I ſhall ſay no more of it here. Only theſe [illegible] all of them, are out of the way [illegible] *believing with all the heart*; and [illegible]evings, with

with all the heart is, I shall yet shew as plainly, and as briefly as I can.

When once a poor Sinner is convinc'd of the errour and evil of his way, and also of the infinite transcendent excellencies of Christ, as all in all to him, he then sees, there is somewhat hereafter to be expected, more than can possibly be had here. And thereupon he is wholly and altogether taken up in his thoughts and affections, about those things which are laid up in Christ, and never to be enjoyed, till his appearing in glory. This hope and expectation of future glory, so works upon him, as he becomes every day more and more crucified to the World, and all things here below, and accounts them (as they are indeed) nothing but vanities and lyes. And as all his hopes are in Heaven, so all his endeavours are only for this, that he may not fail & fall short of those everlasting enjoyments. And accordingly he resolves, that whatever it costs him in doing or suffering for Christs sake, come life, come death; he cares not, so he may have his desires in these. In this way of believing, all the Saints now in Heaven came thither. No temptation on the right hand, or the left, could turn them aside, but they would still hold on in the way of Gods Commandments, whatever became of them. So did *Moses*, *Heb.* 11. 24. 25, 26. *Who refused to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, &c.* Not as *Elihu* charged *Job*, Job 36. 21. *That he had chosen iniquity, rather than affliction.* But as *Zuinglius* hath it, * *what deaths had [illegible] not better chuse, what torments, yea,*

what

what Hell not suffer rather, than go against Conscience rightly inform'd? So did all those Worthies, recorded *Heb.* 11. 33. *ad fin.* These are the Saints indeed, that take Heaven by violence; and they that are not such, at least in the purpose of their heart, will never approve themselves in Gods account, to be found Believers. I know well, there are many Sects in the World, but all those are but of two sorts, and no more will be found at the last day. One of these is that company of men, which will have their reward here, and their portion in this life. It is all they look after, and the best Heaven they desire, is to be left here upon Earth for ever; and to these, the thoughts of Death are very terrible. But there is another sort, who count this Earth to be their Hell; and all their Expectation and Hope is after they are gone hence; and upon this account, they little value what befalls them here. And these are Christians, and Believers indeed: *Their Faith is the ground of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen* 11. It is such a confidence of the Heavenly Inheritance, as makes a man fear nothing; *Having his eye upon the recompence of the reward, and as seeing him that is invisible.* Such Believers will not be frighted, nor flatter'd out of Gods wayes, because they know them to be the only way to Life eternal. Canst thou do thus, and for the joy set before thee endure the Cross, and despise the shame? If thou canst, this is a sound Faith indeed, that will give thee a Living, and that for ever.

Praeparatione animi.

Heb. 11. 1.

Heb. 11. 26, 27.

Obj. If any object, That he may have been afraid, and yielded in [illegible]

Sol.

Sol. I ſay ſo too: But I ſay withall, that never any good man did wholly, and finally deny, and forſake the cauſe of Truth, for any Torments, and Sufferings, and for thoſe who ſtaggered a while, and perhaps recoil'd, they came on again, and found no comfort, till they had recanted their Recantations. All may not have the ſame degree of confidence and courage; but all ſound Believers will hold out to the end, though ſome with more adoe, than others. It cannot be a ſound Faith, that can be totally overcome by any Temptation. To believe ſincerely, is the work of Chriſt, in a Soul; and, *He is ſtronger than he that is in the World*, 1 Joh. 4. 4. ſo as true Believers are ſure at laſt, to overcome, whatever be their conflict. But thou art one, that careſt not for fighting, or ſtriving againſt Sin, with the leaſt hazard, to any of thy ſmalleſt Earthly comforts. Thou art more like thoſe Souldiers that watch'd our Saviour whiles he lay in the Tomb, *Mat.* 28. 11. *&c.* who though they knew, that he was Riſen, as they had ſeen, and could not but know it; yet *verſ.* 15. *Took the money*, that was offer'd them, and *ſaid as they were taught*, i. e. quite contrary, to what they knew in their Conſciences. If there be any thing to be got, Money, or Money-worth, thou wilt deny Chriſt, and his Truth, or any thing thou know'ſt of God. Or if any thing be to be ſuffer'd for the Truth, let it go ſoo thee, 'tis not worth the purchaſe. I ſhall ſay no more to diſcover who are ſound Believers, and who not, but only add a word of Advice to ſuch as profeſs their Faith, and hope to be ſaved by Chriſt,

Christ; but for certain, never yet gave any proof of it: because of this sort are many, that quarrel the wayes of Gods Grace, and Providence, as not equal.

1. Know O vain man, that God hath promised thee Eternal life, as much as any other; and there is no hinderance to thy enjoyment of it, but thine impenitency, and unbelief: and what that is, hath been plainly shew'd before. There is, I say again, no barre to thy Believing, unto the saving of thy Soul, but what thou thy self hast put, by thy wilfull and wayward rejecting of Christ, tender'd to thee. Consider it therefore, and look to it in time, for thine Eternity depends upon it.

2. Thou hast nothing to do, but to humble thy self before the Lord, and acknowledge thine Iniquities, and loath thy self for them, and so flee to lay hold on the Hope set before thee, *Counting all but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the only Lord and Saviour*; and resolve, *To serve him all thy dayes, in holiness, and righteousness before him.* If this be done, thou shalt be Saved, and shalt never meet with any Decree of God, to reject thee. And for the Merits of Christ, thou shalt finde them as all-sufficient to thee, as to any Saint in Heaven. And now say not, thou would'st believe, if thou could'st; for the contrary is most true, as hath been proved before. O! be at last perswaded, to quarrel no more, about [illegible] will avail thee nothing, but presently fall to the work, that lieth plain before thee.

Phil. 3. 8.

Luc. 1. 7[illegible]

If thou wilt know what, I say [illegible]

1. Love

1. Love thy Sinnes no more, count not the profits, and pleasures of them, to be so sweet, when they will be bitterness in the latter end. For they are but well-tasted Poyson, that goes down sweetly, but works sadly in the Bowels afterward. This Poyson indeed, is in thee already; but it will not kill thee, if thou art perswaded to cast it up. And this I give thee to encourage thee, That I know some Sinners yet alive, that have taken in as much Poyson as thou hast, who, by casting it up, as I have now perswaded thee, have much sweet peace, and comfort in Believing, whiles they tread another trace, than once they did. They are now Holy, Devout, and Righteous; who were before Ungodly, Profane, and Vicious. Go thou, and do likewise, and try, whether God will save thee, or no.

2. Lay hold on the wayes of Gods Commandments, and *Write them upon the table of thine heart*, Prov. 3. 3. were thou may'st read more to this purpose, as also *Prov.* 4. 5. besides many, very many places of Scripture, which all cry loud upon thee, to hearken, and hear what God requireth of thee, to the saving of thy Soul. Be but once perswaded to Believe, that God knows the way to Heaven, better than thou dost, and that he hath told thee plainly enough what that way is. And then consider, whether God hath, or can have it in his heart, to abuse, and deceive thee. Yea, to put no further trouble upon thee, [illegible] thine own Conscience, and ask seriously, whether the wayes of sinfull Vanity, and all manner

ner of Iniquity are, or can be the way to Heavenly happineſs, in the enjoyment of God.

And for a Concluſion; be pleas'd to conſider of all that hath been aforeſaid, whether thou haſt nothing to do, about the work and buſineſs of thine own Salvation. For one of theſe two muſt be: Either thou haſt ſomething to do, or nothing at all. If there be ſomewhat for thee to do, (as I ſuppoſe there is) why art thou not about it, and hard at it, and that preſently, without delay? Canſt thou be ſo unreaſonably negligent about thy Soul, when thou art ſo unceſſantly, and exceſſively carefull of every other, the leaſt concernment? Is it nothing to thee, what becomes of thee to all Eternity? Hath God will'd thee to be doing, all thou canſt, for thy preſent Subſiſtence, and nothing at all for thy everlaſting Salvation? Or hath he left it to thy Choice, whether thou wilt do any thing, or nothing at all? Read the Scriptures once more, and ſee, if there be nothing commanded thee in order to this? And be ſure in the firſt place, that thou art left to thy liberty, and under no obligation; or elſe conſider, how thou wilt anſwer for thy diſobedience to Gods Commands.

But if there be nothing for thee to do, or if it be in vain for thee, to beſtow thy care, or pains about it, becauſe there is ſomewhat impoſſible to be done, without any

any sink of thine, I shall say no more, but leave thee to be tryed by what thou know'st to be Gods Law, at the last, and great day of Account, resolving for my self, that if I am saved from Wrath, and Death, it will be only through Gods free Mercy, and Grace, and if I perish, and die in my Sinnes, it will be only through mine own default, because I would not (whil'st I might,) know the time of my Visitation, and the things of my Peace.